

Madness and Anchoring in the Brazilian Press: A Study in Social Representation

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Abstract: The Brazilian Psychiatric Reform sought to introduce new perspectives on madness, integrating other meanings about mental health; however, it seems that mad and crazy are used in everyday communications to describe social events and behaviors. This study aimed to investigate the main contents and beliefs that anchor the social representations of madness in a printed newspaper. A Thematic Content Analysis was carried out with 846 articles from the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* from the years 1978 and 2018. Seven categories were constructed that anchor the idea of madness: Eccentric, Unpredictable, Intense, Irrational, Violent, Subversive, and Transgressive. The stories reinforce the stigma of madness as something divergent, strange. The construction of an inverse anchoring underlies the representations of madness, demarcating the distance between the “normal” and the “crazy”. It was concluded that madness is still understood based on social devaluation and demeaning, leading to exclusionary practices.

Keywords: madness, newspapers, social representation

Loucura e Ancoragem na Imprensa Brasileira: Estudo em Representação Social

Resumo: A Reforma Psiquiátrica Brasileira visou introduzir novas formas de pensar a loucura, trazendo outros sentidos sobre a saúde mental, no entanto, observa-se nas comunicações cotidianas o uso das expressões louco e loucura para adjetivar acontecimentos sociais ou comportamentos diferentes. Este estudo teve como objetivo investigar os principais conteúdos e crenças que ancoram as representações sociais da loucura em um jornal impresso. Realizou-se uma Análise de Conteúdo Temática com 846 matérias do jornal *Folha de São Paulo* dos anos de 1978 e 2018. Construíram-se sete categorias que ancoram a ideia de loucura: Excêntrico, Imprevisível, Intenso, Irracional, Violento, Subversivo e Transgressor. As matérias reforçam o estigma da loucura como algo divergente, estranho. A construção de uma ancoragem inversa fundamenta as representações da loucura demarcando o distanciamento entre os “normais” e os “loucos”. Concluiu-se que a loucura ainda é compreendida a partir da desvalorização e desmerecimento social, acarretando em práticas de exclusão.

Palavras-chave: loucura, jornais, representação social

Locura y Anclaje en la Prensa Brasileña: Estudio en Representación Social

Resumen: La locura se configura como un objeto social que permea diferentes grupos y esferas de la arena pública. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar los principales contenidos y creencias que anclan las representaciones sociales de la locura en un periódico brasileño. Se utilizaron materiales del periódico *Folha de São Paulo* de 1978 y 2018. El *corpus* fue analizado a partir del Análisis de Contenido Temático. Los resultados demuestran la existencia de siete categorías que anclan la comprensión de la locura: Excéntrica, Impredecible, Intensa, Irracional, Violenta, Subversiva y Transgresora. Así, se hizo evidente que los artículos periodísticos refuerzan el estigma de la locura como algo divergente. La construcción de un ancla inversa es un fundamento central para comprender las representaciones de la locura, ejemplificada desde la distancia entre lo “normal” y lo “loco”. En ese sentido, la locura se entiende desde la desvalorización y indignidad social, traducándose en prácticas de exclusión.

Palabras clave: locura, periódicos, representación social

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Social representations, beyond certain uniformity, are characterized by their dynamic character, inserted in contexts of disputes and negotiations. In this way, objects of social representation would hold a multiple and varied understanding among different groups. In this

perspective, it is understood that the belief systems linked to a representation, as well as its structure, are influenced by dynamics at the group and societal levels.

Thus, over time, social representations undergo processes of resistance and change, acting as reflections of new external social dynamics and enabling the reconfiguration of their organizational structure. Taking social representation objects as holding zones of tension (Caillaud, Doumergue, Préau, Haas, & Kalampalíkis, 2019), it is evidenced that madness is inserted in social communications and practices at the same time that people are able to name it in different ways and attribute meanings, characteristics, and values to it. As an object of social representation, it is culturally recognized through the anchoring process itself, which allows subjects to rely on preexisting knowledge to form a new representation. The presence of different ways of categorizing madness exemplifies its polysemy character, as well as demonstrates plural ways of confronting the same object.

In Brazil, the treatment of madness was based, until the late 1980s, mainly on the manicomial view of imprisonment and segregation of those called insane. Over time, in the context of the country's re-democratization and influenced by the Trieste experience, led by Franco Basaglia, the Brazilian Psychiatric Reform, formulated from the struggle of social movements, emerged aiming to change the current model of mental health care, as well as the realization of the rights of psychiatric patients. Understood as the beginning of the Psychiatric Reform organizations in Brazil, the year 1978 is marked by the creation of the Mental Health Workers' Movement (MHWMM). The movement counted on the participation of health care workers, unionists and psychiatric patients who sought the development of a critical and collective mental health care. The MHWMM was also responsible for exposing the crisis of the asylum system, as well as its abuses, violations, and the capitalization behind the system of imprisonment (Machado, 2020).

As Onocko-Campos (2019) points out, when discussing the impacts of psychiatric reform in Brazil, it is necessary to place this movement in its historical context, related to the fight for the universalization of access to health care, as well as the creation of mental health union leagues. After battles and conflicts, the creation of the Unified Health System (UHS), from the *Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988*, marked the beginning of a vast process of change in public policies for mental health. In this period, the regulation and implementation of CAPS and NAPS (*Núcleos de Atenção Psicossocial*) services began, as well as a greater supervision of psychiatric hospitals (Trapé & Onocko Campos, 2017). The early 2000s showed the establishment of new forms of treatment for psychiatric patients, especially with the creation of the Paulo Delgado Law, which privileged mental health care from a community-based perspective (Mezza & Torrenté, 2020).

Currently, as argued by Macedo, Abreu, Fontenele, and Dimenstein (2017), despite the difficulty in fully implementing a community-based and social federal project, 40 years after the beginning of the Psychiatric Reform movements in Brazil, the creation of public policies aimed at mental health care, such as the case of CAPS, CREAS, and NASF, is noted. Insanity, based on the new perceptions

brought by the reform, continues to be an object of discussion in the social reality. Thus, questions arise about the possibility of modifications in the meaning of "crazy" and madness produced by the psychiatric reform. Based on the psychiatric reform that promoted a paradigm shift in mental health care and madness, with the transition from institutional mental institutions to collective centers, it is evident that the perceptions and understandings of "crazy" and madness may have undergone a process of change in social thinking, that is, madness may have undergone a change in meanings at the societal level.

Based on this, it is important to analyze and understand how madness is socially and culturally inscribed after the Psychiatric Reform to understand how a new identity is constructed for the "crazy" subject or if there is the permanence of an already constructed identity. In addition to possible new understandings about madness in a post-reform scenario, there is evidence of a psychiatric counter-reform movement (Chiabotto, Nunes & Aguiar, 2022) marked by a series of dismantling of public mental health policies in Brazil, mainly as a result of neoliberal governments in recent years in the country (Rosa, 2021). This configuration can also influence the way the crazy person is understood, as well as the systems of collective thought that underlie the social representations of madness. Within this perspective, the media, and more specifically the press, would play a central role in the dissemination of these new meanings, besides being a reflection of what circulates in social thought.

The psychiatric reform was characterized as an important symbol of changes in the representations of the "crazy" (Amarante & Nunes, 2018), influencing mainly the discourse of the press. It is emphasized that the analysis of objects in the press, such as the example of madness, can be understood from meanings and comparisons of implicit character. In this sense, the anchoring process shows itself as an important process to analyze the construction of social representations about a certain social object in the press. The anchoring is related to the process in which new information and representations are inserted in a model of preexisting beliefs and meanings, helping to guide behaviors (Moscovici, 2000/2010). As Apostolidis, Duveen, and Kalampalíkis (2002, p. 9) state, while social representations are linked to specific objects, beliefs are more diffuse and "constitute broader anchoring systems from which objects are represented; they form constituent fields for representations".

In this sense, the formation of social representations is linked to previously known information, that is, networks of preceding meaning in a given group or society. According to Kalampalíkis (2020), the anchoring process is directly linked to intergroup dynamics, as well as to the naming process. The author emphasizes that anchoring processes are not based on neutral contexts, that is, social dynamics imply directly in the categorization and naming of new objects. In this way, such understanding can be linked to the case of madness. Thus, madness could be represented based on pre-existing categories within social thought that is, based on a network of meanings that assists in the recognition of the object in question.

Analyzing the contents and beliefs on which the press anchors themselves to talk about madness can demonstrate how certain objects are characterized and represented from an understanding and an implied content. Thus, the use of the words “crazy” and “madness” to define people or events can be an important clue to how their socially shared meanings and representations take root in the sociocultural environment. The analysis of the contents anchored by the press in the social representations of madness in different historical times, before and after the reform, makes it possible to ascertain whether there were changes or/and maintenance in the social thinking about madness and the “crazy”, besides understanding the social view of the crazy, with the advent of new scenarios provided by the psychiatric reform. In this sense, investigating the categories that help in the understanding of madness may reveal not only the contents on which they rely to represent madness, but also possible forms of shared thoughts. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the main contents and beliefs that anchor the social representations of madness in a printed newspaper.

Method

Articles from the Brazilian newspaper “*A Folha de São Paulo*” were analyzed. The choice of the newspaper in question was due to its large circulation, as well as its wide national circulation. The period chosen for the research was between 1978 and 2018. The year 1978 is understood as the initial milestone of the Brazilian Psychiatric Reform Movement, besides representing the moment when the WHO accredited Franco Basaglia’s Italian model. The year 2018 represents the most recent period, in which the guidelines of the Psychiatric Reform may already be consolidated, thus allowing an analysis of possible differences in the articles produced when compared to those at the beginning of the Movement.

Procedures

The articles were selected in their electronic format. It is worth pointing out that the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper has a digitalized collection from 1920. Thus, the descriptors madness and madman were used to select the articles from the two historical periods.

Data collection. Initially, the search for articles in the Digital Archive of the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper in the years 1978 and 2018 was carried out using the descriptors crazy and madman. In a first survey, 2,490 articles were found, including the two selected years. After eliminating duplicate articles, the *corpus* was composed of 2,178 articles. Due to the large number of articles, as well as the objective of the work to analyze the anchoring process in the social representations of madness in the press, it was chosen to select only those articles that discussed madness outside its original sense that is, focused on mental health. Thus, newspaper articles that mentioned madness and the insane in the context of mental health, that is, from a pathological understanding or psychological suffering, were excluded from the sample.

The articles that use the terminology mad/crazy to describe social events, people, or events were chosen to demonstrate how this image is anchored in the contents and ideas of the articles.

After this decision, 922 articles were selected. However, during the reading, it became evident that articles that presented only titles with names of movies and songs, such as “*Um Golpe Muito Louco*” or “*Louco para Amar*”, had an inconclusive character, since only by the title one could not analyze the contents that were being anchored. In this sense, the decision was made to exclude from the sample articles that had only the title of the names of movies and songs. Thus, the total number of articles in the newspaper selected to compose the *corpus* of analysis was 864. After the delimitation of the number of articles of the *corpus* to be analyzed, the transcription in full of all 864 selected articles was carried out.

Data analysis. It was carried out based on the Thematic Content Analysis, proposed by Laurence Bardin. The procedure was carried out based on the divisions proposed by Bardin (1977/2002) about the method of organizing the analysis. In this sense, the analysis procedure was carried out in three distinct moments. The first moment, called Pre-Analysis Phase, was related to the organization of the material. Thus, the researchers initially read the newspaper articles in order to familiarize themselves with the themes found, as well as to create hypotheses about the material. As mentioned before, the newspaper articles were transcribed in their entirety. Thus, the Pre-Analysis phase was based on reading the transcriptions of the newspaper articles.

The second stage of the analysis, called Material Exploration, was based on the codification of the main contents that permeated the newspaper articles. To carry out this procedure, the so-called Registration Units and Context Units, proposed by Bardin (1977/2002), were analyzed. The Registration Units are segments of text used as a basis for the categorization of the contents into themes. In this sense, the Units of Registration analyzed were the segments of text from the newspaper articles that use the term mad/unhealthy. Thus, the Units of Registration of each story were analyzed in order to organize and categorize the contents of the newspaper stories into themes. To help this process, in a second moment, the so-called Context Units were also analyzed. The Units of Context are the basis of the Units of Registration and are related to the message of the article as a whole, not only to the segments of texts that discussed madness. This process helped in the global understanding of how the article was treating madness, thus providing a better organization of the categories.

Analyzing the Context and Registration Units provided a global understanding of how madness was characterized and anchored in newspaper articles, since it provided a view of both the specific text segment that discussed madness, as well as the larger context within which this terminology was used. After the analysis of the Context and Registration Units, we obtained a total of 13 thematic axes that anchored the social representations of madness and the insane in the newspaper articles.

Finally, the third moment was carried out, called Data Treatment and Interpretation. After the delimitation of the 13 initial thematic axes, a process of classification

and organization was carried out, as proposed by Bardin (1977/2002), with the intent of seeking details or groupings for a better delimitation of the themes. This process was based on the transformation of the thematic axes into categories themselves. To carry out this procedure, the premises proposed by Bardin (1977/2002) were taken as a base: the first one being Exclusivity, in which each subject should be classified in only one theme/category. After this procedure, the concept of Homogeneity was used, that is, the categories should have a unique and delimited character, having a circumscribed definition that cannot be confused with others.

The third criterion, proposed by Bardin (1977/2002), is related to Relevance. In this sense, the category should have an importance in relation to the analyzed material. Another point discussed in this procedure was related to Objectivity and Reliability. In this way, it was verified if the categories had defined and precise characteristics, as well as if they had been constructed and worked on in the same way. Finally, the criterion of Productivity was used to analyze if the categories found revealed interesting results about the understanding of madness in the Brazilian press.

In this sense, the final process was based on the reorganization of the thematic axes, aiming at the creation of delimited and objective categories. The process of classification and structuring of the thematic axes allowed the elaboration of categories that met the criteria proposed by Bardin (1977/2002) in relation to Content Analysis. By using these premises, it was possible to delimit a total of seven categories that encompassed contents and beliefs that anchored the social representations of madness in the press.

Results

From the reading and Content Analysis of the articles from the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper, it was possible to construct seven categories that encompassed the contents and beliefs that anchor the social representations of madness. The definition, as well as examples of the categories, will be shown below:

Eccentric: articles that relate madness and the madman to something out of the ordinary, extravagant, that does not follow the standards considered normal, exotic, and unusual.

It seems that the British passion for auctions reaches, or exceeds, the limits of “normal”. According to the news from the Italian magazine “*gente*”, the madness of collectors - and dealers - of historical pieces has reached an extravagance that can hardly be surpassed. Imagine that a pair of Queen Victoria’s “panties” (of course, the old ones that went down to the knees, similar to underpants) was sold in *Asta publica* at “christie’s” auction house. The illustrious piece, with the price stamped on it, was snapped up by a collector who remained anonymous and paid £65 for it (Monteiro, 1978, p. 23).

Unpredictable: refer to madness and the crazy to something that cannot be predicted and evaluated in advance, that which is considered unexpected.

Reporting on the Arctic is at the top of the agenda for every journalist writing about climate change. The region around the North Pole has been the warmest part of the planet for decades. The team from the newspaper experienced at first hand the unprecedented variations in the Arctic climate (...) The last thing you expect at that time of year is rain. Well, the thermometers suddenly rose from -16° C to +3° C, and it started to fall - right on the day we had reserved for exploring glaciers. (...) It was a bit of bad luck, but also luck: we were in the Arctic in one of the craziest weeks of weather, with rain near the North Pole (Leite, 2018, p. B10).

Intense: articles that relate madness and the madman to something with great force, intensity, exacerbation of behaviors or characteristics.

The millionaire world of European soccer is experiencing new turbulence. Not even six months after the amazing transaction that took Neymar from Barcelona to PSG, the market is agitated with the possibility of another stratospheric transfer, now from Paris to Madrid, after the end of the Champions League in May. It reveals the mercenarism of the star that left Santos and the Catalan team badly, and is preparing to repeat the dose with Paris Saint-Germain? We all know that he is crazy about money, but it is not only about being arrogant. It is also about superficiality, dissimulation, and how fragile the relationship between idols and their fans has become. Neymar is in Santos’ history, but he cannot compare to the place that King Pelé occupies in the hearts of Santos fans, even those who did not see him play (...) (Kfourri, 2018, p. B10).

Irrational: refer the madman and madness to something that is devoid of reason that is senseless, senseless, incoherent, reckless, or illogical.

What Brazilians say is that the wheel of a truck has crushed the political system. According to *Datafolha*, 87% of Brazilians approved the movement that paralyzed the country for a week and 56% defended its continuity. At the same time, 87% rejected the tax increases and public spending cuts necessary to meet the movement’s demands - and 56% evaluated that the result is harmful to “Brazilians in general. The “voice of the people” makes no logical sense. But there is method in the madness. Polls on subjective opinion regarding ongoing events are complex investigations. The intrinsic wording and contextualization of the questions have a strong impact on the answers (...) (Magnoli, 2018, p. A6).

Subversive: articles that relate madness and the madman to insubordination, opposition to regimes, revolutionary, disrupting the conjuncture.

(...) – General, let’s suppose that General Euler wins the election in October. If he wins, will he take it? “It is difficult to answer. You can be sure only that the army supports the president. “So, if the president decides that General Euler doesn’t get it if he wins, he doesn’t get it at all? “He doesn’t. The army follows the president.” - But it would be an illegality. “As you know we don’t live in a democracy. As long as we are under the regime of exception, the army follows the president.” - But, general, there are military people who support General Euler. “I said that the army follows the president; that doesn’t prevent a group from deciding to do crazy things..., but it would certainly be a minority (...) (Bittencourt, 1978, p. 4).

Transgressive: relate madness to violation, infraction of norms, action of disobedience.

(...)Rita Lee is the queen of rock, but she was accompanied by a super talented band. I’m as much a fan of her as the others: of Franklin Paolillo’s drums, Luis Sergio Carlini -considered one of the greatest guitarists in the country- and the great bass player that is Lee Marcucci. “*Ovelha Negra*” is a classic, an *anthem of the madness* of that time. It represents well the conflict of young people with their parents and family - all of them functional, and only you are not (I mean, you are also functional, only in another way). I also really like the B-side, the songs that not many people know (Casagrande, 2018, p. 2).

Violent: articles that relate madness and the insane to aggressiveness, use of brute force, cruel and tyrannical behavior, oppression.

(...)The AP news agency reported that the town of Leon is virtually destroyed and a Red Cross spokesman said they have burned 50 bodies to prevent the spread of epidemic, which is also being done by the victims’ families. “Somoza must resign. Only a madman can do such a thing. We are not communists here. We are simply ordinary people,” one Leon resident told AP while looking at his ruined house. The UPI reported for its part that the National Guard offensive will now be directed against the cities of Esteli, Chinandega and Diriamba, where the Sandinistas hold partial control (“*Somoza intensifica censura*”, 1978, p. 5).

As evidenced by Table 1, the categories of Intense and Irrational presented the highest percentage of the *corpus*: representing 35.6% 36.2% respectively The Eccentric category was composed of 126 subjects, totaling 14.5% of the total. The Unpredictable category was composed of 47 articles, accounting for 5% of the total *corpus*. The Violent category had a frequency of 34, amounting to 4%. The Subversive category was composed of 34 articles, representing 3%. Finally, the Transgressive category had eight articles, representing less than 1% of the *corpus*. Table 1 presents the distribution and quantity of articles in each category, as well as the representative percentage of each theme in relation to the total *corpus*.

Table 1

Results of the Thematic Content Analysis performed with the “Folha de São Paulo” newspaper articles

	Total Number of Articles (864)	Number of Articles in 1978	Number of Articles in 2018	% <i>Corpus</i> Representative
Eccentric	126	84	42	14.5%
Unpredictable	47	31	16	5.45%
Intense	308	181	127	35.6%
Irrational	313	184	129	36.2%
Violent	34	19	15	4.0%
Subversive	28	28	0	3.2%
Transgressive	8	0	8	0.92%

Discussion

In order to analyze possible changes in the anchored contents about madness in the years 1978 and 2018 in the press (before and after the psychiatric reform), the permanence of five categories in both historical times was evidenced: Eccentric, Unpredictable, Intense, Irrational, and Violent. However, it is noted that the articles that anchored madness in contents focused on the Subversive field were specific to 1978, while those based on the Transgressive belief were only present in 2018.

As evaluated by Moscovici (2000/2010), the process of anchoring and elaboration of social representations does not occur in impartial contexts. The anchoring is based, above all, on societal dynamics in which the individual is inserted. Thus, the process of classification and familiarization of an object would necessarily be based on a certain social hierarchy. In this sense, individual and collective act as a determined interactive unit, enabling the apprehension of contents that permeate the social group and the public arena in its totality. From this, it is evident that the year 1978 is linked to the period of Brazilian

military dictatorship (1964-1985). In this sense, the contents and beliefs that anchor the social representations of madness and of “being crazy” are based on a political bias. Those who somehow showed themselves to be contrary to the authoritarian regime were categorized as deviants and holders of madness.

Madness is then understood from pre-existing knowledge, related to anchorage, as well as from the historical-social context that formulates such knowledge. In this sense, madness would be a way of grounding subversion. This phenomenon, as ascertained by Velho (1981), is related, above all, to the discreditable character of madness, in which mental illness is seen as a justification for the explanation of insurgent behavior. Thus, “since mental illness accounts for anything, it can explain subversion and drugs. The solutions are known: convictions, punishments, loss of rights, internment in various types of institutions, etc.” (Velho, 1981, p. 61). Madness being anchored in subversion can be evidenced in the following article from 1978:

The lawyer José Carlos Dias, president of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of São Paulo, declared that he will request the unsealing of the military police investigation about the death at DOI-Codi of the worker Manoel Fiel Filho (...) Geraldo Castro da Silva, a nurse’s aide who was arrested with Manoel Fiel Filho, at the DOI-Codi in January 1976, and who was heard last Friday by the Commission for Justice and Peace (CJP), said that he was tortured at the DOI-Codi, with shocks, spankings, in the “dragon chair”, and that he was left in a deplorable state. (...) Geraldo revealed that while having lunch he was called by the jailer and, together with other prisoners, taken to the cell where Fiel Filho was dead. At the door, according to him, there were two men with Asian features and one of them said: “Look, this crazy man committed suicide; there was no need for it. If you say otherwise out there, we have the address of one by one of you, and you will pay the consequences” (“*Advogado vai desarticular inquérito sobre Fidel F*”, 1978, p. 8).

However, it is evident that the 2018 articles that anchor madness as Transgression discuss it in the context of social norms, that is, in the scenario of conducts and customs. Thus, there is a change in some senses of the madman as a subject. If in 1978 the madman was also thought of as the rebel, revolutionary, who acts against a certain social political conjuncture, in 2018 this sense disappears in the press and the idea of the madman as one who does not meet social expectations and norms is present. In the 2018 articles madness is anchored in the non-fulfillment of social roles and expectations, while in 1978 being mad is based on mutinous and insurgent behavior. This change in anchoring is exemplified in the following article from 2018:

The world she wrote for was not receptive to the powerful art of a strong woman. It may be hard to believe, but Hilda Hilst did not debut in the world already old, at the age of 70. In the afterword he signed in the Hilstian collection of poetry (*Companhia das Letras*, 2017), the writer Victor Heringer said that the image of a

half-crazy, hermit, aloof, undomesticatable woman that is made of Hilda says more about those who try to enclose her in labels than about herself. (...) For Hilda, there has always been a great prejudice against women writers. If today they are celebrated and recognized, even when they also embrace such specific genres as erotic poetry, the world Hilda Hilst wrote for was not the most receptive to the impeccable and powerful art of a beautiful, brilliant, strong, young woman (Franco, 2018, p. C4).

This excerpt from the 2018 newspaper article illustrates the discussion of madness as the act of noncompliance with social norms. One has as an example the author Hilda Hilst and her behavior of insubordination to the expectations of what would be acceptable for a woman. The woman who does not conform to the ideal of femininity, that is, the one who transgresses social norms and expectations, would be considered crazy. Thus, there is an accentuation of contents related to customs, while in the 1978 articles; the focus is on political action and the bias of the crazy as subversive.

Although they demonstrate some changes between the historical periods, the way madness is anchored in the press in the two years studied reveals that being “crazy” is related, above all, to something dissonant. Although we are not working with the so-called concrete meaning of madness, related to mental illness, by analyzing in which contents the social representations of madness are anchored, it is possible to investigate how it is represented and to which other objects and characteristics it is related, thus helping in the understanding of the social meaning of madness. From this, it is evident that the contents present in the categories reinforce the stigma of madness as something different and nonconforming to the normative behaviors. According to Goffman (1963/2013) stigma is an attribute or mark that makes an individual different from others. Insanity would be, then, seen as a mark that separates the so-called “crazy” from the “normal” ones.

According to Link and Phelan (2013) the stigma of madness consists of four main components. Initially, the different individual is categorized and marked. After that, negative stereotypes, produced by a certain dominant culture, relate to the marked difference. Next, the marked individuals are separated into different categories, establishing a distinction between the “us” versus “them.” Finally, these individuals are victims of discrimination and lose social status. In this same perspective, Goffman (1963/2013) argues that there are two types of subjects who suffer from stigma: the discredited and the discreditable. The discredited would be the one who has the apparent stigma, that is, who demonstrates through signs and symbols his condition of being stigmatized. As for him, the discredited would be the subject who does not have such a visible stigma and may use mechanisms of “concealment” so that his deviant assignment is not perceived.

In the case of the articles analyzed, the stigma of madness is perceptible to the extent that the subject performs deviant actions or behaviors, that is, outside the expected normative conditions. Madness would then be anchored in the belief of the different, of the one who is separated from the collective. This idea of the stigma of madness anchored in non-normative

behaviors is supported by Phelan, Link and Dovidio (2008) when they argue that the non-compliance with conduct or social norms would be one of the reasons for stigmatization and prejudice. In this sense, it can be seen that madness circulates in the press based on a thought focused on deviance, being marked by a social devaluation and demotion.

As mentioned earlier, stigma is usually related to the depreciation of the individual. Thus, allied to stigma, it was evidenced that the newspaper articles classify madness as a totalizing category, marked by a social devaluation from the demotion of the opinions and behaviors of those called insane. In view of this, the results obtained demonstrate the relationship between stigma and disparagement, by showing that in about 52% of the *corpus* analyzed, the way madness is anchored is related to the devaluation of behaviors or individuals, such as in political contexts or negative and non-normative behaviors. Thus, madness would be used as a way to belittle and invalidate certain subjects and attitudes. As Kalampalikis (2009) evaluates, when naming an object we are classifying it in a network of preexisting meanings. Thus, by using the term madness/sadness, the newspaper articles show the function socially attributed to madness, linked to a context of depreciation and social discredit. These findings demonstrate relationships with the study of Lampropoulos, Wolman, and Apostolidis (2017), when evidencing the use of the metaphor of schizophrenia in French newspapers to devalue individuals and behaviors, with emphasis on the political context. In this sense, it is noted the use of madness in most of the contexts, as a way to devalue individuals, which demonstrates its social meaning related to derogatory issues.

According to the concept of accusation systems proposed by Velho (1981), there are social groups that would experience more intensely social demerit and devaluation. For the author, these groups would be in the Brazilian reality: the mentally ill, drug addicts and subversives. Madness and mental illness is attributed to the “drug addicts” and “subversives” to explain their behavior and actions. As discussed earlier, the category of subversive found proves the link between deviance and madness. Insanity would have the function of explaining the behavior of individuals, especially those said to be divergent. Besides having a high social devaluation, the groups inserted in the accusation systems would have low social trust, causing a scenario of false accusation. Madness would be used as a mechanism to discredit people and behaviors, helping to maintain social hierarchies.

The newspaper articles, besides showing the permanence of the stigma and the devaluation of madness, demonstrate a separation and differentiation between the so-called “normal” and the “insane”. This process of distancing is related, above all, to the idea of familiarization linked to the anchoring process. As previously discussed, one of the functions of anchoring would be to familiarize the unknown, that is, to give meaning to a new object from preexisting and culturally accessible knowledge, recognizing it from previously known categories. Going deeper into the discussions about the anchoring process, it is evident that the analyzed articles anchor madness not from a familiarization bias, but from a strangeness maintenance bias, as a form of inverse anchoring (Kalampalikis, 2009).

According to Kalampalikis (2009), there would be two types of anchorage: the first, related to symbolic thinking, would be based on the idea of familiarization of a new object from previously known categories. The second, linked to stigmatized thinking, would act from the maintenance of the unknown character, that is, in the maintenance of the non-familiarity of the new object. According to the author, the inverse anchoring is based on the continuity of the non-familiar property of the object, that is, the permanence of a differentiation between the self and the other. Thus, the inclusion of new contents within a representation could occur from the preservation of the unknown status of the object. In this sense, when analyzing the contents that anchor the social representations of madness, it becomes evident that the anchoring acts in the opposite way, aiming at maintaining the distance from madness and promoting a non-familiarization of it. The newspaper articles reinforce the idea of madness as something distant from the normative reality, as well as delimit what is considered “normal” and what is linked to the idea of the unusual, that is, what is not known (Jodelet, 2002). Allied to this, in a more recent perspective, the findings of Santos, Danfá, and Almeida (2021) also point to this type of anchoring, when they argued that the names assigned to the figure of the insane over the years after the psychiatric reform, despite undergoing some changes, still refer to madness to strangeness, marked by a non-familiar sense. Thus, madness is still based on differentiation, analyzed from the distinction between the “I”, holder of certain rationality, and the “other”, marked by an irrational and unpredictable character.

Madness has been, and continues to be, an object of discussion in social reality, marked by divergences and ambiguities in its conceptualization and naming. The changes with the mental health care, as well as the approach of the mentally ill to social coexistence put under discussion the meanings of madness in the social thought. The meanings of madness, however, could be accessed from underlying contents, linked to the anchoring process. Thus, analyzing in which contents the social representations of madness are anchored allows us to verify the social meanings of this object in so-called “non-real” contents. The press would play a central role in the dissemination of these meanings and representations, besides being a reflection of the meanings that madness has within social relations. Thus, social representations circulate social interaction and influence the direction of social practices, helping in the construction of the individual/society relationship. Working from the anchored contents, the results obtained demonstrate the maintenance of stigmas related to madness, as well as a demotion and distancing of the so-called “crazy people”.

The changes in the social context that occurred between the years 1978 and 2018 bring variations of meanings that go from the political deviant subject to the deviant subject of hegemonic social norms. The idea of deviation, of an “other” marked by irrationality and unpredictability maintains, however, the stigma of madness making discreditable the behaviors and opinions of the subject considered mad. Madness thus remains strange, in a process of “reverse anchoring”. In this sense, the findings highlight the importance of analyzing the meanings and social representations that circulate in social thought about madness as a way to propose changes and foster dialogues about the

condition of these individuals in society. By evidencing that social representations and practices go together, it is important to analyze how social representations of madness are articulated and organized in social thought, so that new practices may be reflected that aim at an understanding of madness that does not promote distancing or separation.

The data presented here is limited to the analysis of a single mass communication vehicle and focuses on the production of the written text. The analysis of images linked to written content can be an important source of information to deepen the iconic dimension of social representations, as well as the analysis of other media can broaden the discussions on the theme.

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