

## FROM PSYCHODYNAMICS TO PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF WORK IN BRAZIL: (IN)DEFINITIONS AND POSSIBILITIES<sup>1</sup>

**Fernanda Sousa-Duarte<sup>2</sup>**, Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3071-7531>

**Solange Silva<sup>3</sup>**, Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4143-2152>

**Maria Júlia Martínez<sup>4</sup>**, Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4280-1925>

**Ana Magnólia Mendes<sup>5</sup>**, Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8887-6450>

**ABSTRACT.** This article analyzed the state of the art of psychopathology of work in Brazil, as an object of study and as a subject, by performing an integrative systematic literature review. A search was conducted in virtual databases using the descriptors 'psychopathology of work' and 'psychopathology' (AND) 'work'. We included articles available in full in Portuguese, published in blind peer-reviewed journals containing the descriptors in the title, abstract, keywords and/or body of the text. The final set of texts consisted of 28 articles published between 1992 and 2019, mostly in psychology journals using psychodynamics of work as theoretical and/or methodological reference. Three trends were also identified in the use of the term 'psychopathology of work' in the articles: 1) psychopathology of work as an object of study; 2) as a subject; and 3) to discuss the understandings of the relationships between work and pathologies and their practical implications. As an object of study, the relationship between work and mental illness is neglected. As a subject, inaccuracies that flexibilize or ignore the limits between psychopathology of work and psychodynamics of work were identified. Both trends in the literature may be related to the lack of reflections that consider the Brazilian context to understand the relations between work and pathology.

**Keywords:** Psychopathology; work; Brazil.

## DA PSICODINÂMICA À PSICOPATOLOGIA DO TRABALHO NO BRASIL: (IN)DEFINIÇÕES E POSSIBILIDADES

**RESUMO.** O presente artigo analisou o estado da arte da psicopatologia do trabalho no Brasil, como objeto de pesquisa e como disciplina, a partir de revisão bibliográfica sistemática integrativa. Foi realizado levantamento em bases de dados virtuais utilizando os descritores 'psicopatologia do trabalho' e 'psicopatologia' (AND) 'trabalho'. Foram incluídos artigos disponibilizados integralmente em português publicados em revistas com revisão cega de pares contendo os descritores no título, resumo, palavras-chave e/ou corpo do texto. O conjunto final dos textos analisados se constituiu de 28 artigos publicados entre 1992 e 2019 majoritariamente em periódicos da psicologia com psicodinâmica do trabalho como referencial

<sup>1</sup> This article was developed with support from CAPES in the Sandwich PhD Program -88881.187927/2018-01

<sup>2</sup> Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Brasília-DF, Brazil. E-mail: [sousaduartefernanda@gmail.com](mailto:sousaduartefernanda@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Brasília-DF, Brazil. E-mail: [sollsilvar@gmail.com](mailto:sollsilvar@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Brasília-DF, Brazil. E-mail: [mariajuliamendina@gmail.com](mailto:mariajuliamendina@gmail.com)

<sup>5</sup> Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Brasília-DF, Brazil. E-mail: [anamag.mendes@gmail.com](mailto:anamag.mendes@gmail.com)



teórico e/ou metodológico. Foram ainda identificadas três tendências no uso do termo 'psicopatologia do trabalho' nos artigos: 1) psicopatologia do trabalho como objeto de estudo; 2) como disciplina; e 3) para debater as compreensões das relações entre trabalho e patologias e suas implicações na prática. Enquanto objeto de estudo, as relações entre trabalho e doença mental são negligenciadas. Como disciplina, identificaram-se imprecisões que flexibilizam ou ignoram os limites entre psicopatologia e psicodinâmica do trabalho. Ambas as tendências da literatura podem estar relacionadas com a desconsideração de fatores históricos na determinação da construção dos campos de estudo.

**Palavras-chave:** Psicopatologia; trabalho; Brasil.

## DE LA PSICODINÁMICA A LA PSICOPATOLOGÍA DEL TRABAJO EM BRASIL: (IN)DEFINICIONES Y POSIBILIDADES

**RESUMEN.** El presente artículo analizó el estado del arte de la Psicopatología del Trabajo en Brasil, como objeto de investigación y como disciplina, a partir de revisión bibliográfica sistemática integrativa. Se realizó un levantamiento en bases de datos virtuales utilizando los descriptores 'psicopatología del trabajo' y 'psicopatología' (AND) 'trabajo'. Se incluyeron artículos disponibles integralmente en portugués publicados en revistas con revisión ciega de pares conteniendo los descriptores en el título, resumen, palabras clave y/o cuerpo del texto. El conjunto final de textos analizados se constituyó de 28 artículos publicados entre 1992 y 2019 mayoritariamente en periódicos de Psicología con Psicodinámica del Trabajo como referencial teórico y/o metodológico. Se identificaron tres tendencias en el uso del término 'psicopatología del trabajo' en los artículos: 1) psicopatología del trabajo como objeto de estudio; 2) como disciplina; y 3) para debatir las comprensiones de las relaciones entre trabajo y patologías y sus implicaciones en la práctica. En cuanto objeto de estudio, las relaciones entre el trabajo y la enfermedad mental son poco estudiadas. Como disciplina, se identificaron imprecisiones que flexibilizan o ignoran los límites entre Psicopatología y Psicodinámica del Trabajo. Ambas tendencias de la literatura pueden estar relacionadas con la desconsideración de factores históricos en la determinación de la construcción de los campos de estudio.

**Palabras clave:** Psicopatología; trabajo; Brasil.

### Introduction

As a topic of interest, workers' mental health began to be formally mentioned during the Industrial Revolution, in Europe, with the advent of occupational medicine – such as legal medicine and occupational hygiene – and medical services in the workplace. These services, centered on the figure of the physician, focused on the proper functioning of work processes and aimed at preventing accidents and diseases. However, health promotion was never among its objectives – although it could be a consequence of these actions (Alves, 2015).

For some time, most Psychology and Psychiatry studies focused on increasing productivity. Albuquerque (1978) argues that the rise of the bourgeoisie was an important factor in changing the conceptualization of normal and pathological, and unproductivity came to mean exclusion in this context. To be considered normal, it would be necessary to

be active and meet the work parameters established by the owners of the means of production.

Although in England some studies have differed from the lines aimed at increasing productivity - such as those by Menzies (1960) and Jaques (1951), based on psychoanalytic approaches to work relations - a Psychopathology of Work interested in the consequences of work on workers' health emerged in France (Billiard, 2002). As an area of study initially linked to Psychiatry, Paul Sivadon used the term for the first time in an article in 'L'évolution psychiatrique' in 1952 indicating the existence of a set of innovative practices and questions that emerged after the Second World War – questions and practices that united and divided psychiatrists.

According to Lima (1998), another significant milestone, also in the 1950s, was the publication of Le Guillant's study on mental illness at work. When presenting the 'telephone operator neurosis', the author investigated relationships between the organization of work and disorders presented by several workers from the same professional group. Between the 70s and the 90s, in the face of industrialization, new forms of work and management and emerging psychological disorders in France, Psychopathology of Work was presented as an approach to these problems.

In the 1980s, a new movement began (Lima, 1998; Billiard, 2002). Dejours proposed renaming the approach to Psychodynamics of Work from then on. With his proposal, he sought to provide a view of work as a structuring factor to mental health as well as reflections on new destinations for suffering, such as pleasure and health (Dejours, 2004). Thus, Dejours argued that Psychopathology of Work had in suffering its object of study (Dejours, 1989) and that normality, and no longer mental illness, was the enigma.

According to Lima (1998), Dejours based the shift to Psychodynamics of Work on the argument that it was impossible to establish causal relationships between mental disorders and the organization of work. As an alternative, the author proposed that work could be a trigger rather than a cause of mental disorders, questioning the idea of causality in the relationship between illness and work. Assuming that the relationship between man and organization of work is in continuous movement, Dejours (2011) also suggested that the shift to Psychodynamics of Work was necessary.

Psychodynamics of Work has been considered either an extension of Psychopathology of Work - a continuation (Billiard, 2002) - or a distinct approach (Dejours, 1992). The lack of consensus about Psychodynamics of Work concerning Psychopathology of Work -and vice versa - and the return to Psychopathology of Work in Dejours and Gernet's book in 2012, *Psychopathologie du travail* encouraged us to reflect on the state of the art of Psychopathology of Work in Brazil.

Understanding the background and the developments of a field is essential for designing research agendas in the area, we aimed to investigate how Psychopathology of Work has been approached in Brazil. We assume psychopathology of work as an object of study and as an approach in order to investigate its state of the art in Brazil and reflect on its future.

## Method

We carried out an integrative systematic literature review. According to Whitemore and Kanfl (2005), this type of review enables the development of theories and areas of study by presenting a topic's state of the art. Botelho, Cunha e Macedo (2011) suggest six steps for this type of review: (1) identification of the theme and selection of the research question; (2) establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria; (3) identification of pre-selected studies;

(4) categorization of selected studies; (5) analysis and interpretation of results; and (6) knowledge synthesis. In this section of the article, we describe steps (2), (3) and (4).

Between February 2018 and May 2019, we collected studies in the electronic databases Biblioteca Virtual Saúde Psicologia (BVS-Psi), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel) using the descriptors 'Psychopathology of Work' and 'Psychopathology' (AND) 'Work'. Before applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, we identified 815 texts for 'Psychopathology' (AND) 'Work' and 45 for 'Psychopathology of Work'. The texts were pre-selected after three authors of the present study read the abstracts. After the first evaluation, we selected 54 and 27 texts from each set - 81 in total.

We re-evaluated the set of 81 texts according to the following inclusion criteria: (a) articles containing the term 'Psychopathology of Work' in the title or body of the text; (b) published in Portuguese; (c) in a journal with blind peer review; (d) fully available online. Following these criteria, 34 articles were selected. Exclusions were (a) dissertations, theses, monographs, books, book chapters, reviews, editorials; (b) duplicate articles; (c) articles whose descriptors appeared only in the references and (d) articles that were not fully available. The application of these criteria excluded six articles, and the final set of articles consisted of 28 publications.

Data were extracted from the full texts by all authors. Then, there was a discussion of possible disagreements in the classification of texts, searching for consensus. The 28 articles selected for review were categorized according to (a) year of publication; (b) nature of the study – theoretical or empirical; (c) research design in empirical studies – qualitative or quantitative; (d) professional category studied; (e) theoretical framework; and (f) use of the term 'psychopathology of work'. These data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and are presented below.

## **Results**

Most of the 28 selected studies were published between 2000 and 2009 (n=16). The oldest article was published in 1992 and the most recent in 2019. No growth or decline trends were identified in publication. Although studies referring to 'psychopathology of work' also seem to be of interest for different areas, more than half of the publication was in Psychology (n=15). The rest of the production was distributed among nine other areas. Table 1 presents this data.

More than half of the studies were empirical and used qualitative methods (n=14). A large part of the empirical studies had a specific professional category as sample – six were about healthcare professionals or other care activities. Table 2 lists the characteristics of the studies according to their nature, research design and sample.

**TABLE 1**  
Articles published per decade and per area/theme of the journal

<b>Decade</b>	<b>n</b>
1990-1999	3
2000-2009	16
2010-2019	9
<b>Area or theme of the journal</b>	<b>n</b>
Administration	1
Education	1
Nursing	2
Interdisciplinary	3
Psychology	15
Psychopathology	2
Psychiatry	1
Collective health	1
Occupational health	1
Public health	1

**TABLE 2**  
Articles published per decade and per area/theme of the journal

<b>Nature of study</b>	<b>N</b>
Empirical	16
Theoretical	12
<b>Research design</b>	<b>N</b>
Qualitative	25
Quantitative	3
<b>Professionalgroup</b>	<b>N</b>
Health	6
Education	3
Industry	3
Financial sector	2
Call center	1

Eight different theoretical frameworks were identified in 22 studies, as indicated directly or indirectly by their authors. The six articles in which identification was not possible were literature reviews or theoretical studies discussing different theoretical approaches. The references identified were: Clinic of Activity, Ergonomics, Psychoanalysis, Psychodynamics of Work, Psychopathology of Work, Sociology of Leisure, Social Representation Theory and Stress Theory. The authors used Psychodynamics of Work widely. Table 3 indicates the number of publications applying each theoretical framework:

**TABLE 3**Theoretical framework used per article

<b>Theoretical framework</b>	<b>n</b>
Clinic of Activity	1
Ergonomics	4
Psychoanalysis	6
Psychodynamics of work	9
Psychopathology of work	7
Sociology of leisure	1
Theory of Social Representations	1
Stress theories	1

Seven articles used more than one theoretical framework – as in Fernandes, Ferreira, Albergaria and Conceição’s article (2002) that used Psychodynamics of Work and Social Representation Theory to investigate mental health and female work. In ‘Lazer, trabalho e promoção da saúde mental para os trabalhadores de hospital’ (Camargo & Bueno, 2004), the choice was for Sociology of Leisure and Psychodynamics of Work, and in Vieira, Oliveira, Silva and Couto (2012), for Ergonomics and Psychopathology of Work in a study with pyrotechnicians. Psychoanalysis and Psychopathology of Work were indicated together as a single theoretical framework in four works (Goulart, Santiago, & Drugg, 2003; Echeverria & Pereira, 2007; Mendes, Chaves, Santos, & Neto, 2007; Vieira, 2014) that addressed experiences of suffering, Repetitive Strain Injury - RSI - and sick leaves among teachers.

Mendes et al. (2007) and Vieira (2014) refer to Psychopathology of Work as “Dejours’ Psychopathology of Work” (p. 530 and p. 114, respectively). Although Goulart et al. (2003) and Echeverria and Pereira (2007) did not put it in the same way, they primarily use the works of Christophe Dejours to refer to Psychopathology of Work as a theoretical framework. These data lead to another classification of the articles: how the selected works framed psychopathology of work as an object of study.

The studies used the term to refer to psychopathology of work as an object of study and/or a theoretical framework. References to it as an object of study were made in lower case, ‘psychopathology of work’. When referred to as a theoretical framework that supported – or not – the study carried out, it almost always appeared in capital letters - Psychopathology of Work. It was sometimes referred to as a specific approach, defined by its French origins and focus on understanding the genesis of work-related psychopathologies, and sometimes as an approach within mental health and work studies.

It was not possible to identify the single definition of the object of study or key concepts of Psychopathology of Work as a theoretical framework. Nevertheless, the predominant trend in the texts was to attribute it to Christophe Dejours, using concepts characteristic of Psychodynamics of Work. Mentions of it as an object or as a theoretical frame work were also associated with debates on the relationship between pathology and work or the role of healthcare professionals, more specifically psychologists, in cases of work-related mental disorders.

We can also say, approaching these characteristics in-depth, that three trends were identified in the use of the term ‘psychopathology of work’ in the articles: 1) psychopathology of work; 2) (In)definitions of Psychopathology of Work; and 3) debates on Psychopathology of Work. The first trend is the psychopathology of work as an object of study. The second one includes diverse uses of it as a theoretical framework. The third trend presents debates about or that stem from the approach. We delve deeper into the reporting of these results in the following subsections.

### **1) ‘psychopathology of work’**

Some publications used the term psychopathology of work to refer to an object of study, a phenomenon to be investigated – based mainly on the generic designation of pathologies related to work, such as depression and RSI. This approach was more frequent in empirical studies investigating psychopathologies in various professional groups using different theoretical frameworks in the first two decades of the 2000s (Echeverria & Pereira, 2007; Monteiro, Oliveira, Ribeiro, Guisa, & Agostini, 2013; Vieira, 2014; Rubin & Roso, 2018).

Other examples of the use of the term as an object, but in a different way, are the empirical article addressing organizational strategies to deal with psychopathologies (Vasconcelos & Faria, 2008) and the theoretical article that presented the different approaches in mental health and work but treated psychopathology as an object, referring to Psychopathology of Work and Psychodynamics of Work as one theoretical approach (Jacques, 2003).

### **2) (In)definitions of psychopathology of work**

The articles that addressed Psychopathology of Work did it in diverse ways, with no consensus about its definitions. Some of the studies did not specify whether or not they differed Psychopathology of Work from Psychodynamics of Work, referring to it as Psychopathology of Work, Psychopathology and Psychodynamics of Work and Psychopathology as Psychodynamics of Work.

Those defining it as an approach did so from its origins in post-World War II France within Psychiatry, in addition to highlighting the tensions and theoretical diversity of its founders in search of understanding the relationship between work and illness (Lima, 1998; Nassif, 2005). About the objects and objectives of studies in Psychopathology of Work, some other authors presented their definitions, such as Palácios, Duarte and Câmara (2002, p. 844): “[...] we have gathered under the title of Psychopathologies of Work the studies addressing the psychopathological effects related to work. Mental suffering and mental exhaustion are examples”.

The same authors also defined, indirectly, what Psychopathology of Work is concerned with: “[...] this previous study was inserted in the field of Psychopathology of Work, since its object was the mental suffering of workers” (Palácios et al., 2002, p. 845). Bertoncini (2002, p. 39) shared a similar perspective on the objective of Psychopathology of Work: “[...] the dynamic analysis of psychological processes modified by the individual’s confrontation with the reality of work”.

Some referred to it as Psychopathology and Psychodynamics of Work (Fernandes et al., 2002; Camargo & Bueno, 2004; Souza & Leite, 2011) or Psychopathology of Work with concepts from Psychodynamics of Work (Mendes et al., 2007; Zilotto & Oliveira, 2014; Vieira, 2014). Among the latter, there were also those who named this framework as

'Christophe Dejours' Psychopathology of Work', usually pointing out to the joint use of Psychoanalysis and Psychopathology of Work as theoretical references.

It is also worth noting how this trend developed along the years. From the 2000s onwards, references to Psychodynamics of Work or the attribution of Psychopathology of Work to Christophe Dejours became more frequent. Some authors referred to Psychodynamics of Work as an expansion of studies in mental health and work (Goulart et al., 2003). Bertoncini (2002) stated that:

Today, from the initial studies of Psychopathology of Work, which focused on issues of suffering in work situations, studies have expanded and evolved into the concepts of Psychodynamics of Work, which surpasses studies on the health-disease dynamics, to work in a field where the focus is both on work processes and issues of human suffering in their relations with the organization of work (p. 40).

### 3) Debates on psychopathology of work

This trend includes a historical perspective (Lima, 1998; Gomes, 2004; Nassif, 2005), placing the approach in its French origins. Gomes (2004) mentioned Psychopathology of Work as a background to Psychodynamics of Work. Lima (1998) and Nassif (2005) were concerned with circumscribing it as an approach marked by the diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives in its origins, differentiating it from Psychodynamics of Work. These three studies were theoretical and rescued historical aspects regarding the foundations of Psychopathology of Work as an interdisciplinary approach or field of study focused on the relationship between work and mental illness.

In the set of texts discussing the relationship between work and pathology, Karam (2003), for example, adopted the perspective of Psychopathology and Psychodynamics of Work to question the limits between normal and pathological when talking about alcoholization and alcoholism. Without specifying a theoretical framework, Manetti and Palucci Marziale (2007) pointed to 'internal factors of work'; – such as the organization of work – as triggers of work-related depression in nurses. Deriving, indirectly, from this last reflection, another debate in Psychopathology of Work refers to the relationship between work and mental illness. Jacques (2003) discussed the theoretical and methodological assumptions of the contributions of different approaches to health/mental illness related to work according to the emphasis given to work in the process. They highlighted tensions and disagreements in the approaches and pointed out the possible uncritical use of divergent concepts in the same study.

Still, regarding this relationship, Lima (2003) contextualized the controversy of the causal nexus – a term associated with the legal field and which, in this case, explores the relationship between work and illness from a causal point of view. The author discussed the differences between Psychopathology and Psychodynamics of Work, citing Le Guillant, on the one hand, and Dejours, on the other: the first with a sociogenic notion of Psychopathology of Work and the second with a point of view that privileges the psychogenic and structural aspects of personality instead of the socio genesis of work-related mental disorders.

Still within the field of controversy pointed out by Lima (2003), Junior and Cunha (2015) questioned the causal nexus in a case study on Psychopathology of Work in Brazil. Based on discussions on mental, social, and organic causality in the field of mental health they disagreed with the comprehensive perspectives of Jacques (2003) and Lima (2003). The authors presented a discussion of the case study on Lacanian Psychoanalysis. Their article also discussed how the emphasis on work conditions to the development of mental illness can influence the activity of 'psy' professionals.



Echeverria and Pereira (2007) and Brandão and Lima (2019) also presented reflections on how conceptualization of work-mental illness relationships can impact the work of health care professionals. The first two authors proposed that introducing a social dimension to illness to healthcare professionals in charge of cases of RSI can alter their notion of pathology and, consequently, their clinical performance. The authors also argued for presenting the psychopathological dimensions of RSI and pointed to psychoanalytic psychotherapy as a valuable tool to 'achieve states of improvement' with patients. Brandão and Lima (2019) presented the Clinic of Activity as a possible intervention in Psychopathology of Work, highlighting the relevance of the theoretical and methodological bases in this field.

## Discussion

In Brazil, the set of articles using the term 'psychopathology of work' is characterized by references to Psychodynamics of Work and Christophe Dejours. The publication began in 1992 and peaked between the years 2000 and 2009. We hypothesized that such trend is associated with the translation and publication of two works by Dejours with titles alluding to Psychopathology of Work: *A loucura do trabalho: ensaio em psicopatologia do trabalho* in 1988 and Christophe Dejours: *da psicopatologia à psicodinâmica do trabalho*, a collection of texts organized by Lancman and Sznclman in 2004.

Unlike the French trend of developing the approach within Psychiatry (Billiard, 2002; Dejours & Gernet, 2012), discussions involving the term in Brazil have been of interest to the areas of Psychology and Nursing. Merlo and Mendes (2009) observed a similar trend in studies on Psychodynamics of Work. Two other similar characteristics: predominance of empirical studies using qualitative methods and focusing on specific professional groups.

Regarding the latter, Junior and Cunha (2015) criticize the focus of Psychopathology of Work in the study of professional groups. However, the association between a type of professional activity and specific disorders is also a source of controversy since the foundations of Psychopathology of Work, marked by the diversity of theoretical approaches, as noted by Lima (1998). Such controversies, in a way, maybe related to the number of theoretical references used by the articles analyzed here.

Such a variety of theoretical approaches was also pointed out by Jacques (2003) when reflecting on the understanding of the relationship between work and mental health/illness in the field of mental health and work in Brazil. Alves (2015) also discusses the country's history in their thesis on the sociopolitical construction of work-related mental and behavioral disorders. Despite the variety of approaches, we highlight the preference for Psychodynamics of Work as a theoretical or theoretical-methodological category in Brazil.

This preference is consistent with findings of other studies. According to Fairman (2012), Psychodynamics of Work is considered one of the most used approaches to comprehend workers' health and illness in Brazil. This preference for the approach may relate to the lack of clear methodological propositions in Psychopathology of Work, as observed by Brandão and Lima (2019). The 'Metodologia em Psicopatologia do Trabalho' described by Dejours in *A loucura do trabalho* may have been an attraction for researchers interested in reflecting on the themes of health and illness at work.

Dejours cites Psychoanalysis' contributions to the construction of Psychodynamics of Work several times (Lima, 1998). However, the Brazilian literature on work-related health/illness separates Psychopathology of Work and Psychoanalysis, most times indicating the former as a theoretical support to analyze the intersections between the subjective and the social dimensions.

In the case of joint reference, the two works by Dejours already cited have also been used as bibliographic references. They probably refer to *Psychodynamics of Work* as a synonym for *Psychopathology of Work* because they are the texts they had access to, without a historical perspective of the approach, as hypothesized by Lima (1998). We also noted that those who adopted *Psychodynamics of Work* seem to deny the contributions of Psychoanalysis for the approach. Such tendency can be related to academic tensions between Clinical Psychology and Psychology of Work in Brazil.

As an object of study, psychopathology of work has been neglected. In broader terms, relations between work and mental illness have been neglected. These two gaps are critical and need to be discussed - as well as the understanding of relations between work and illness in Brazil, both in academic and legal terms - considering that, in Brazil, mental and behavioral disorders are the third most common cause for sick leaves amongst workers (Brasil, 2017).

To understand this trend, we reflect on the issue of normal versus pathological and the focus of *Psychodynamics of Work* on suffering as an object of study. First, to discuss the relationship between work and mental illness, it is necessary to define what mental illness is, after all. How to think about the role of work as a cause or aggravating factor without a conception of psychopathology? As Junior and Cunha (2015) reflect in questioning the causal nexus: is the symptom at work seen as a dysfunction or as an invention?

Such controversies originate from the different conceptions of psychopathology and its relationship with a social dimension and, although such conceptual preciousness seems to be a particular concern for academia, there are repercussions on the performance of healthcare professionals treating workers with mental illness, whether there is consensus between theorists or not. One of the implications of possible theoretical hesitation in defining mental illness and the role of work in its genesis is the damage in personal and legal terms to sick workers.

Although there is no consensus in the studies reviewed here, mental and behavioral disorders can be understood as diseases, in which work complicates or expands their etiology. According to the World Health Organization, work can provoke or aggravate these disorders (Brasil, 2001). Thus, we can say that the State also defines the approach to the relationship between work and mental illness in a given country.

Regarding *Psychodynamics of Work*, studies that historicize its introduction in Brazil reflecting on the national history of work begin to emerge (Duarte & Mendes, 2015). Related to *Psychopathology of Work* that emerged amid a specific historical context in France, it is not surprising that *Psychodynamics of Work* has been incorporated in Brazil by most researchers without reflecting on the different historical contexts of work and mental illness in France and Brazil: the history of both fields of study has been ignored by most.

Considering that an approach is characterized by singularity (Santos, 2014), despite its interdisciplinarity and shared interests, we cannot affirm that *Psychodynamics* and *Psychopathology of Work* are one. Addressing the former as a synonym of the latter may result from the imprecision placed by Dejours throughout his work, with the book *Psychopathologie du travail* written with Gernet in 2012, being another example of the lack of definition.

Although *Psychodynamics of Work* presents a model encompassing the understanding of the relationship between work and pathology, we emphasize that using it to refer to *Psychopathology of Work*, as in Brazil, may be related to the difficulty amongst psychologists in making approximations on the theme of work-related health and illness, as discussed in Matsumoto and Fairman (2014). Merlo and Mendes (2009) noted that the

production on Psychodynamics of Work in Brazil focused more on understanding the processes of non-pathological destinies of suffering at work.

It is noteworthy that our study is limited by investigating the uses of psychopathology of work in the Brazilian context, without using 'Psychodynamics of Work' as a search descriptor, an approach that proved to be predominant in studies that refer to the term. Although there are strong reasons to believe that historical factors shapes our results, there is no way to say whether the results would be different in France – from where most of the theoretical approaches used by the Brazilian research quoted here came from.

Comparative Brazil-France state of the art studies should be performed as a research agenda. Another possibility of understanding the study of psychopathology of work as an object would be a literature review including studies on Psychodynamics of Work. Although Merlo and Mendes (2009) pointed out that the trend in Psychodynamics of Work was to investigate the processes of subjective mobilization, it may be that this focus has changed. If so, this would provide new data to understand how the relationship between work and mental illness has been explored by Brazilian scholars using Psychodynamics of Work as their main theoretical framework.

## Final considerations

This study mapped gaps in the literature on psychopathology of work in Brazil as an object of study. We identified conceptual uncertainties that undermine the theoretical delimitation between Psychopathology and Psychodynamics of Work. We consider that using the two as correspondents has been counterproductive to the development of rigorous investigations of the relationship between work and psychopathology in the country. We recognize that the lack of definition may result from the complexity of studying how work and psychopathology relate to each other. We envision possibilities of renewing the debate on work and illness in Brazil by proposing Psychopathology of Work as a field of study based, mainly, on the clinical listening of workers, as suggested by Mendes (2018) in their proposal for a Clinical Psychopathology of Work. A decolonial turn (Maldonado-Torres, 2008) can renovate this field as theory and practice in Brazil. This renovation should include discussions of socio-historical, ontological and epistemological aspects of work and psychopathology (Duarte, 2020) that characterize both work and psychopathology within the modernity/coloniality of Latin America.

## References

- Albuquerque, J. A. (1978). *Metáforas da desordem: o contexto social da doença mental*. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Paz e Terra.
- Alves, N. C. R. (2015). *A construção sociopolítica dos transtornos mentais e do comportamento relacionados ao trabalho* (Tese de Doutorado). Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo.
- Bertoncini, E. M. L. (2002). Trabalho, identidade e aposentadoria precoce: notas teóricas sobre o sofrimento do trabalhador. *Revista de Psicologia da UNESP*, 1(1), 38-50.

- Billiard, I. (2002). Les pères fondateurs de la psychopathologie du travail en butte à l'énigme du travail. *Revue Cliniques méditerranéennes*, 11-29. <https://doi.org/10.3917/cm.066.0011>
- Botelho, L. L. R., Cunha, C. C. A., & Macedo, M. (2011). O método da revisão integrativa nos estudos organizacionais. *Gestão e Sociedade*, 5(11), 121-136. <https://doi.org/10.21171/ges.v5i11.1220>
- Brandão, G. R., & Lima, M. E. A. (2019). Uma intervenção em Psicopatologia do Trabalho- contribuições da Clínica da Atividade. *Revista Brasileira de Saúde Ocupacional*, 44, e19. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2317-6369000009118>
- Brasil. Ministério da Fazenda. (2017). *Anuário estatístico da previdência social*. Recuperado de: <http://sa.previdencia.gov.br/site/2019/04/AEPS-2017-abril.pdf>
- Brasil. Ministério da Saúde. (2001). *Doenças relacionadas ao trabalho: manual de procedimentos para os serviços de saúde*. Recuperado de: [http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/doencas\\_relacionadas\\_trabalho\\_manual\\_procedimentos.pdf](http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/doencas_relacionadas_trabalho_manual_procedimentos.pdf)
- Camargo, R. A. A. D., & Bueno, S. M. V. (2004). Lazer, trabalho e promoção da saúde mental para os trabalhadores de hospital. *Escola Anna Nery Revista de Enfermagem*, 8(1), 71-80.
- Dejours, C. (2004). Addendum da psicopatologia à psicodinâmica do trabalho. In S. Lancman & L. Sznelwar (Orgs.). *Christophe Dejours: da psicopatologia à psicodinâmica do trabalho*. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Fiocruz.
- Dejours, C. (2011). A carga psíquica do trabalho. In C. Dejours, E. Abdoucheli, C. Jayet & M. I. S. Betiol (Coords.), *Psicodinâmica do trabalho: contribuições da escola dejouriana à análise da relação prazer, sofrimento e trabalho* (1a ed., 12. reimpr., p. 21-32). São Paulo, SP: Atlas.
- Dejours, C. (1989). Introdução à psicopatologia do trabalho. *Tempo Social - Revista de Sociologia da USP*, 1, 97-103.
- Dejours, C. (1992). *A loucura do trabalho: estudo de psicopatologia do trabalho* (5a ed. ampl.). São Paulo, SP: Cortez.
- Dejours, C., & Gernet, I. (2012). *Psychopathologie du travail*. Paris, FR: Elsevier Masson.
- Duarte, F. S. (2020). *Trabalhadores no divã: contribuições da psicopatologia clínica do trabalho* (Tese de doutorado). Universidade de Brasília, DF.
- Duarte, F. S., & Mendes, A. M. B. (2015). Da escravidão a servidão voluntária: perspectivas para a Clínica Psicodinâmica do Trabalho no Brasil. *Farol – Revista de Estudos Organizacionais e Sociedade*, 2(3): 71-134.
- Echeverria, A. L. P. B., & Pereira, M. E. C. (2007). A dimensão psicopatológica da LER/DORT (lesões por esforços repetitivos/distúrbios osteomusculares relacionados ao trabalho). *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicopatologia Fundamental*, 10(4), 577-590. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1415-47142007000400002>

- Fairman, C. J. S. (2012). *Saúde do trabalhador*. São Paulo, SP: Casa do Psicólogo.
- Fernandes, J. D., Ferreira, S. L., Albergaria, A. K., & Conceição, F. M. D. (2002). Saúde mental e trabalho feminino: imagens e representações de enfermeiras. *Revista Latino-Americana de Enfermagem*, 10(2), 199-206. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-11692002000200012>
- Gomes, A. M. G. (2004). Da psicopatologia à psicodinâmica do trabalho: trajetórias da escola francesa. *Revista de psicologia*, 22(1), 27-31.
- Goulart, J. A., Santiago, A. R. F., & Drügg, Â. (2003). Afastamento para tratamento de saúde: sintoma institucional e recurso precário no enfrentamento do sofrimento psíquico no trabalho docente. *Revista Mal Estar e Subjetividade*, 3(2), 372-394.
- Jacques, M. D. G. C. (2003). Abordagens teórico-metodológicas em saúde/doença mental & trabalho. *Psicologia & Sociedade*, 15(1), 97-116. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-71822003000100006>
- Jaques, E. (1951). *The changing culture of a factory: a study of authority and participation in an industrial setting*. Londres, UK: Tavistock Press.
- Júnior, A. B., & Cunha, D. M. (2015). O sintoma no trabalho: uma disfunção ou uma invenção? *Laboreal*, 11(2), 53-62. <https://dx.doi.org/10.15667/laborealxi0215aj>
- Karam, H. (2003). O sujeito entre a alcoolização e a cidadania: perspectiva clínica do trabalho. *Revista de psiquiatria do Rio Grande do Sul*, 25(3), 468-474. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-81082003000300008>
- Lima, M. E. A. (2003). A polêmica em torno do nexo causal entre distúrbio mental e trabalho. *Psicologia em Revista*, 10(14), 82-91.
- Lima, M. E. A. (1998). A psicopatologia do trabalho. *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão*, 18(2), 10-15. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1414-98931998000200003>
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2008). La descolonización y el giro des-colonial. *Tabula Rasa*, 9, 61-72. <https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.339>
- Manetti, M. L., & Marziale, M. H. P. (2007). Fatores associados à depressão relacionada ao trabalho de enfermagem. *Estudos de Psicologia*, 12(1), 79-85. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-294X2007000100010>
- Masumoto, L. K., & Fairman, C. J. S. (2014). Saúde mental e trabalho: um levantamento da literatura nacional nas bases de dados em Psicologia da Biblioteca Virtual de Saúde (BVS). *Saúde, Ética & Justiça*, 19(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2317-2770.v19i1p1-11>
- Mendes, A. M. B. (2018). *Desejar, falar, trabalhar*. Porto Alegre, RS: Editora Fi.
- Mendes, L., Chaves, C. J. A., Santos, M. C., & Neto, G. A. R. M. (2007). Da arte ao ofício: vivências de sofrimento e significado do trabalho de professor universitário. *Revista Subjetividades*, 7(2), 527-556.

- Menzies, I. E. P. (1960). A case in the functioning of social systems as a defence against anxiety: a report on a study of the nursing service of a general hospital. *Human Relations*, 13, 95-121.
- Merlo, A. R. C., & Mendes, A. M. B. (2009). Perspectivas do uso da psicodinâmica do trabalho no Brasil: teoria, pesquisa e ação. *Cadernos de Psicologia Social do Trabalho*, 12(2), 141-156.
- Monteiro, J. K., Oliveira, A. L. L., Ribeiro, C. S., Grisa, G. H., & de Agostini, N. (2013). Adoecimento psíquico de trabalhadores de unidades de terapia intensiva. *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão*, 33(2), 366-379. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1414-98932013000200009>
- Nassif, L. E. (2005). Origens e desenvolvimento da Psicopatologia do Trabalho na França (século XX): uma abordagem histórica. *Memorandum: Memória e História em Psicologia*, 8, 79-87. <https://doi.org/10.35699/1676-1669.2005.6764>
- Palácios, M., Duarte, F., & Câmara, V. D. M. (2002). Trabalho e sofrimento psíquico de caixas de agências bancárias na cidade do Rio de Janeiro. *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, 18(3), 843-851. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-311X2002000300028>
- Rubin, A. L., & Roso, A. (2018). Trabalho e depressão: tendências na produção de conhecimento. *Pesquisas e Práticas Psicossociais*, 13(1), 1-18.
- Santos, V. M. P. D. (2014). Ciências e disciplinas: uma análise epistemológica sobre cursos de formação de professores de Matemática. (Tese de doutorado). Rede Amazônica de Educação em Ciências e Matemática, Mato Grosso.
- Souza, A. L. & Leite, M. L. (2011). Condições do trabalho e suas repercussões na saúde dos professores da educação básica no Brasil. *Educação & Sociedade*, 32(117), 1105-1121. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-73302011000400012>
- Vasconcelos, A., & Faria, J. H. (2008). Saúde mental no trabalho: contradições e limites. *Psicologia & Sociedade*, 20(3), 453-464. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-71822008000300016>
- Vieira, C. E. C., Oliveira, A. C., Silva, I. A., & Couto, R. I. (2012). Os bastidores da produção de fogos de artifício em Santo Antônio do Monte: degradação das condições de trabalho e saúde dos pirotecnistas. *Cadernos de Psicologia Social do Trabalho*, 15(1), 135-152. <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.1981-0490.v15i1p135-152>
- Vieira, S. R. S. (2014). Sofrimento psíquico e trabalho. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicopatologia Fundamental*, 17(1), 114-124. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1415-47142014000100009>
- Whittemore, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). Uma revisão integrativa: uma metodologia atualizada. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 52(5), 546-553.
- Ziliotto, D. M., & Oliveira, B. O. D. (2014). A organização do trabalho em call centers: implicações na saúde mental dos operadores. *Revista Psicologia Organizações e Trabalho*, 14(2), 169-179.

Received: May 31, 2019  
Approved: Oct. 16, 2020

Fernanda Sousa-Duarte, conception, design, analysis and interpretation of data; writing of the manuscript, critical review of the content and approval of the final version to be published.

Solange Silva, writing of the manuscript, critical review of the content and approval of the final version to be published.

Maria Júlia Martínez, writing of the manuscript, critical review of the content and approval of the final version to be published.

Ana Magnólia Mendes, approval of the final version to be published.