



Original Article

Social occupational therapy and social justice: dialogues based on the demands of trans populations

Terapia ocupacional social e justiça social: diálogos a partir das demandas trans

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Abstract

The main purpose of this text is to present reflections guided by the concept of social justice for social occupational therapy focusing on the demands of trans individuals brought up through research based on oral history and ethnographic techniques that aimed to understand how these people build and/or mobilize, throughout their life histories, strategies to face the conditions of marginalization experienced in their everyday lives, configuring certain ways of life. The understanding of these histories triggers an important debate in the field of social justice for social occupational therapy that, for us, dialogues with the idea of justice developed by Nancy Fraser, based on a conception that aims at economic redistribution and symbolic recognition. We consider that this is a powerful proposition, mainly because its foundation offers readings about social inequalities and possible ways of affirming existence. Therefore, if the praxis of social occupational therapy proposes to combine the *social field* technically and politically, it is necessary to understand the multiple ways of life, especially the contradictions that involve these realities, including the subjectivity, history, culture, and political relationships, among other elements in the everyday lives of people, to *think/do* together possibilities and ways to live better, based on social negotiations.

Keywords: Occupational Therapy, Social Justice, Transgender Persons, Gender Diversity, Inequalities.

Resumo

A proposta central deste texto é apresentar reflexões balizadas pelo conceito de justiça social para a terapia ocupacional social a partir das demandas trans levantadas por meio de uma pesquisa que, com base na história oral e técnicas

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etnográficas, objetivou compreender como pessoas trans constroem e/ou mobilizam, ao longo de suas histórias de vida, estratégias de enfrentamento das condições de marginalização vivenciadas em seus cotidianos, configurando determinados modos de vida. Compreender essas histórias aciona um debate importante no campo da justiça social para a terapia ocupacional social que, para nós, dialoga com a ideia de justiça articulada por Nancy Fraser, baseada em uma concepção que mira à redistribuição econômica e ao reconhecimento simbólico. A aposta que fazemos quando utilizamos essa proposição nos parece potente, sobretudo por oferecer, na sua fundamentação, leituras acerca das desigualdades sociais e dos caminhos possíveis de afirmação de existência. Por isso, se a práxis da terapia ocupacional social propõe articular técnica e politicamente o *campo social*, é necessário o entendimento dos múltiplos modos de vida, sobretudo das contradições que envolvem essas realidades, dentro daquilo que diz da subjetividade, da história, da cultura, das relações políticas, entre outros elementos que desembocam no cotidiano das pessoas, para se *pensar/fazer*, junto, possibilidades e caminhos de/para se viver melhor, a partir das negociações sociais.

Palavras-chave: Terapia Ocupacional, Justiça Social, Pessoas Transgênero, Diversidade de Gênero, Desigualdades.

Introduction

We fight for rights because we need them to survive. We need to have a decent place to live, what to eat, we need to be able to get into school and finish our studies without having to end up with mental health for that... to have other options besides prostitution... But it's not just rights, you know, those that the State should offer to all citizens and we must beg to be able to have access... We need respect, to be treated like people, to be real human beings... worthy of having a boyfriend, and not to be looked at with fear or pity. We need to be treated as citizens and as human beings (Bianca, field diary).

Bianca is one of the five trans people followed throughout the research that provides the reflections proposed in this text, sharing her life story and her narrative for a better apprehension and understanding of the ways of life of people who, like her, experience what is called gender dissent¹. She tells us about the difficulties faced by this population in accessing goods and services, but not only that. She points out, above all, the difficulties of achieving recognition regarding gender identity about human status, as Brazilian sociologist Bento (2014) makes us reflect. The central purpose of this text is to show analyses guided by the concept of social justice for social occupational therapy based on the trans demands raised through the research that was part of the doctoral thesis entitled *Between ruptures and permanences: ways of life and strategies to face life on the margins in the daily life of trans people* (Melo, 2021).

¹Term used considering the debates on gender proposed by Butler (2003) to refer to people whose gender identity differs from the binary models that were socially instituted based on heteronormativity.

The main objective of this study was to understand how transgender people build and/or mobilize, throughout their life stories, coping strategies for the conditions of marginalization experienced in their daily lives. To this end, were followed five trans people living in the State of São Paulo, Brazil, between 19 and 37 years old². The oral history of life (Meihy, 2005) and techniques derived from ethnography (Geertz, 1989) were used as methodological devices in the construction of data, which were collected from audio-recorded interviews and field diaries of observation/monitoring, between February 2017 and 2021. The choice of interlocutors was made through insertion in the field (still in previous research) and interactions and indications resulting from it.

The stories offered elements for the background of life trajectories, which sometimes point to difficulties in the field of access, sometimes to almost invisible elements of a social norm that intends to determine what one can be, how one can be, and which places are designated for those who “are not”.

Therefore, we are talking about individuals and/or populations that experience processes of marginalization and social stigmatization, and how these processes affect the construction of trajectories and concrete possibilities of living life, especially when building and accessing resources for social participation and facing conditions of exclusion, becoming the key to rights and citizenship.

Talking about social participation in the scope of social occupational therapy, when it comes to certain population segments, requires us, for example, to think beyond the possibility of circulation and access to public spaces and social rights. It is necessary to reflect, first, on how these individuals can break with the barriers of invisibility imposed by the stigma³, which places them in marginal areas within social dynamics, directly implying experiences of precarious citizenship⁴ (Bento, 2014).

These invisibilities, denials, and marginalizations produced by hegemonic discourses, within normative systems interest us and, above all, how struggles for recognition and redistribution (Fraser, 2003, 2004)⁵ can contribute to emancipation and social participation. We are also interested in the resistance experiences of subjects who own their bodies, of identities that slide in the possible mutability of existing and being in the world, and people who are read as abnormal by the same society that

²For ethical purposes, in this research, the names of the interlocutors were changed to preserve their identities. The data produced were reviewed and approved by the interlocutors.

³The term “stigma” is directly related to classical antiquity, a historical moment when it designated “[...] body signs in which it is sought to show something extraordinary or bad about the moral status of the person presenting them” (Goffman, 1980, p. 11). In the Christian era, the term gained the connotation of divine origin and, later, of physical problems. Nowadays, the word “stigma” reallocates its semantics to speak of something that must be avoided, a threat to society, that is, a deteriorated social identity. Goffman (1980, p. 41) talks about how the stigma is built and marks the subjects: “[...] the stigmatized person learns and incorporates the point of view of normal people, acquiring the beliefs of the wider society to identity and to have a general idea of what it means to have a particular stigma”.

⁴Term used by sociologist Bento (2014). The author points out: “The precarious citizenship represents a double negation: it denies the human and citizen condition of individuals who carry certain marks on their bodies. This double negation is historically based on the bodies of women, blacks, lesbians, gays, and trans people (transvestites, transsexuals, and transgenders). To enter the category of human and citizen/citizen, each of these bodies had to be built as a political body. However, political, economic, and social recognition was (and continues to be) slow and discontinuous” (Bento, 2014, p. 167).

⁵Isso será retomado adiante neste texto. Nancy Fraser points out, in several of her works, that participation necessarily involves the recognition of different socially invisible groups and the redistribution of resources that enable and encourage participation; struggles for recognition and redistribution stem from processes of subordination that prevent participation and produce social injustice. For Fraser (2004), parity of participation is necessary, which will only be achieved through *reciprocal recognition and equality of status*. This will be resumed later in this text.

produces their places of existence. We are especially mobilized to reflect on how lives outside the norm produce resistance and confrontation in everyday life and in the construction of stories that are both individual and collective. We seek to reflect on how these daily lives are re-elaborated, lives and actions are constructed and, above all, how are possible ways of coping with these invisibilities, marginalization, and, consequently, the denial of rights and access to citizenship, having the struggles for redistribution and recognition in search of equal social participation as direction, in their identity, economic and political spheres, that is, struggles for social justice.

Individuals and Demands

Marcela, Tiago, Dan, Bianca and Talita. Five experiences that are very close due to gender issues, and very far apart, due to other differences.

Marcela is a 33-year-old transsexual woman whose life was permeated with possibilities and access. Good schools, consistent sociability circuits, access to leisure spaces, and an active and present support network. Marcela works as an accountant in a healthcare company in the city of São Paulo, she is married and speaks two languages besides Portuguese. She shared a story of difficulties with the identity construction process during childhood and adolescence, but she could get a way to have social participation during adult life. Access to opportunities because of her origin in an upper-middle-class context in a large metropolis is an important clue to understanding how she was experiencing and building her social place. Even so, Marcela affirms the recurrent need to mobilize strategies to circulate in different spaces of the city and articulate some social practices that focus on her condition as a trans woman. The way people look at her, the laughter, and the lack of receptivity in some situations are cited as barriers that trigger the need for protection:

I know that if I wasn't the boss, I would have problems with many of the employees at my job. Some just treat me because of my position. But outside of my work, I don't have that place, I'm just one of the crowds, so I feel. So, what do I do? I avoid the crowd! Literally! Because, you know, it's exhausting of you to command respect. I'm trans but I'm cool, you know? I'm trans but I'm not a prostitute, I'm trans but I don't rob anyone... It's a lot of stigmas and I prefer to preserve myself (Field Dairy).

The demands that Marcela experiences are not related to access to goods and services, for example, but to the recognition of her identity, in a condition of equal belonging or social status.

Bianca, a black transvestite, also 33 years old, a sex worker, and living in the same city as Marcela, showed a story that tells another reality. The lack of acceptance from the family (except from one of her brothers, who is gay) during childhood, the break from school due to the context of violence, and the circuits of prostitution are part of Bianca's life story. Years later, she completed high school through the Transcitizenship Program⁶, a time when her relationship with the social movement intensified.

⁶Intersectoral public policy implemented in the city of São Paulo aimed at the social integration of transvestites and transsexuals based on education. It was launched in 2015, together with the service sectors brought together by the municipal departments

Bianca points to militancy as one of the main spaces of sociability and strengthening in her experience since through it, “[...] *it becomes clear that being a transvestite is resisting every day the absence of a gaze from the State, and also from the population*”. She also says:

There is no public policy that responds to our needs, there is no acceptance by society... We must take risks every day and still be blamed for the situation we are experiencing... If we are not strengthened by being with our sisters, who are we going to count on? You must stand firm to fight, but alone you can't (Field Diary).

Talita, like Bianca, is a trans woman from the popular class. She is 20 years old, living in a city in the interior of São Paulo, and she is also a sex worker. She was born in a city in the Brazilian Northeast. She is the oldest of four siblings and “dropped out” of school during high school. Her sociability network is made up of the friends she made in the prostitution circuits, and Talita spends most of her time with them. Opportunities to enter the job market have always been scarce for her and, despite having some training in makeup and secretarial services, she found it very difficult to be interviewed during the numerous job searches. Talita says that living with her friends guarantees her access to strategies to remain in the prostitution circuits and support in social transits; however, social participation difficulties still exist.

Even on the corner, it is difficult [to have] respect. Now imagine going to the supermarket, to stores, to the doctor. We survive as we can. But also, if even at home I have to deal with it, imagine on the street, right? (Interview).

She also says:

I think that if I had studied more, I could have achieved something better, but I also wonder if girls who have parents who accept and who study, if they have all this respect. Because I think the big issue is that nobody respects us [...] Even more black, poor, and northeastern like me (Field Diary).

If the absence of education seems to represent the absence of an important alternative in the composition of confrontations with everyday conditions of marginalization in Talita's experience, her presence confirms her potency in experiences such as Dan's.

Dan is a 37-year-old trans man who has lived 30 years of his life as a lesbian male. Having attended religious spaces for most of his childhood and early adolescence, his expulsion from the church and the resulting family and social crisis, with the search for insertion in the job market and some financial autonomy, the possibilities of self-recognition and identity constitution began to become more concrete. Enrolling in a

of Health, Education, Labor, Women and Assistance, and Social Development, with the aim of strengthening the professional activities of transgender people. To this end, the program proposed, at the time of Bianca's insertion, that the beneficiaries receive a scholarship in the amount of R\$ 910.00 (increased in 2016) for the completion of Basic Education and for professional education. The aim was to promote youth and adult education, classes and human rights, professional courses, preparation for the job market, and internship, totaling a weekly workload of 30 hours. The program guaranteed the use of the social name in all documents of the municipal education network, hormone treatment in basic health units, taking as a priority the reception of the participants in *Casa Abrigo do Brasil*, exclusive for transvestites and transsexuals in street situations, and at the Zaki Narch Complex and at the Women's Reference Center, ensuring priority assistance to transvestite victims of violence.

pre-university preparatory course and later in a higher education course on a public university campus in the interior of the state, were crucial for the composition of a new repertoire that would enable not only the understanding of oneself in terms of identity but also the understanding of the social norms that constructed this identity (im)possibility. During the university course, he joined collectives and spaces of the institutionalized and non-institutionalized social movements. A doctoral research internship abroad, in 2017, constituted a key stage in the composition of his experiences as a trans man since in Europe, outside the vigilant eyes, he lived for the first time the experience of being a trans man. At the end of his doctorate, and as a teacher in the public Basic Education network, he began to dedicate even more to militancy spaces and the production of solidarity networks for trans men in the process of identity transition. His struggle with social movements incorporated the struggles in favor of the demands of the trans population, but he affirms, based on his experiences, that the recognition of multiple gender identities points to the need to deconstruct gender norms.

The academic experience also appears in the life story of Tiago, a 30-year-old trans man living in a city in the interior of the state of São Paulo. He is a geography teacher and dates Alana, his biggest support in the gender transition process. The ever-present family conflicts made Tiago get involved with a certain protection and preservation, represented by studies and academic spaces, which, according to him, “[...] *strengthened and equipped him for the confrontations of life, but not enough to expose himself without fear*”.

His efforts focus on training and militancy spaces more located in academic contexts, given the implications of violence that exposure can entail.

Social Occupational Therapy and Social Justice: Dialoguing With the Stories

For us, the debate developed here, within social occupational therapy in dialogue with the field of occupational therapy in general, announces perspectives for thinking/doing and technical-political design. Especially, when dealing with the ways of life of trans people, which makes it possible to understand the dissident ways of living, within a narrative of life itself. This movement triggers an understanding that contributes to the professional field going beyond what are ways of life announced by the status quo, placing the need and urgency to understand ways of living that go beyond the limits set by the “known and expected”.

This possibility, for us, is articulated with the idea of social justice announced by Fraser (2006). This author proposes a debate on two conditions linked to injustice: socioeconomic injustice and cultural or symbolic injustice, which impose two necessary paths: policies of economic redistribution and recognition, arguing that:

The remedy for economic injustice is some kind of political-economic restructuring. It may involve redistribution of income, reorganization of the division of labor, democratic controls on investment, or the transformation of other basic economic structures. [...] The remedy for cultural injustice, in contrast, is a cultural, and symbolic change of some kind. It may involve revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups.

It may also involve the recognition and positive appreciation of cultural diversity. Even more radically, it can involve a comprehensive transformation of social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication to transform the sense of self in *all people* (Fraser, 2006, p. 232, emphasis added).

Fraser refers to two types of injustices that, to a lesser or greater degree, cross trans experiences and demand recognition in two distinct poles, but sometimes interdependent: politics and culture, and he still states: “[...] to see recognition as a problem of justice is to treat it as a matter of social status” (Fraser, 2003, p. 29). Thus, he considers that for democratic participation in social life, the individual needs to have material and economic resources and a context in which the standards of cultural values produce respect and, therefore, equal opportunities to obtain social esteem.

Farias et al. (2019), when briefly analyzing the conceptions of social justice that have been parameterizing social occupational therapy, taking into account its historicity, movements, and trends, based especially on what was consolidated in the Metuia Network - *Social Occupational Therapy*⁷, identify that from the beginning the propositions of this subarea and group focused on thinking about social vulnerabilities and disaffiliation with marginalized populations, parameterized by processes of disruption of social support networks and struggles for social insertion, according to the French sociologist Robert Castel (1998). It is a reading in which the social issue in capitalist society stems from structural economic inequality and possibilities of insertion, via integration through work and belonging. Thus, both the dimension of the capital-work relationship, that is, a conception of justice based on redistribution, and the notion that citizenship and the resulting social rights would be the axis of a struggle for recognition of common belonging, in which several struggles against oppression, including identity struggles, would come together (Barros et al., 2002, 2007a, 2007b, 2011). However, reaffirming that issues related to cultural aspects, differences – in cultural and symbolic status (Fraser, 2002, 2006) – were also present (Barros, 2004; Barros & Galvani, 2016), even if this appeared, in analysis, with less strength.

In this path of social occupational therapy and the Metuia Network, this process was strengthened. Farias et al. (2019) analyze, for example, that today social occupational therapy, especially in the Metuia Centers, guides its productions and actions for redistribution. This is a dilemma that would have marked the initial actions of the subarea, and recognition, a dilemma that gains greater space over time, around the construction of social justice. It should be noted that these productions, regardless of specific concerns, outline a critique of capitalist society, in a defense that this mode of production – even with pacts made between capital and work – is not capable of producing full equality and justice, since social inequality and exploitation are necessary to what structures capitalism.

⁷The Metuia Network – Social Occupational Therapy, which emerged as the Metuia Project, refers to the teaching, research and extension group in social occupational therapy formed in 1998 by professors from the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar), University of São Paulo (USP) and Pontifícia Católica de Campinas (PUC). Today, the Metuia Network is made up of Núclei from UFSCar, from USP-Sao Paulo, from the Federal University of Sao Paulo (UNIFESP), from the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES), from the University of Brasília (UnB) and adds to Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB) and the Universidade Estadual de Ciências da Saúde (UNCISAL). Also, in a non-nucleated way, other researchers and professionals also participate in this network.

In addition, an important milestone in the subarea, for a debate situated in the dialogue between distribution and recognition, was its participation and production for the emergence of the Graduate Program in Occupational Therapy at UFSCar (PPGTO/UFSCar), in 2010, which was also leading to its thematic expansion, for example, the ethnic-racial issues, gender and sexuality dissidents, rural and indigenous populations, drug abuse, childhoods, etc.

Monzeli (2022, p. 7) also indicates this historical process, by

[...] highlight that, in the first decade of the 21st century, social occupational therapy ends up producing two main theoretical movements that will contribute to future publications in the area: on the one hand, the foundations influenced by a historical materialist perspective; and, on the other hand, discussions based on socio-anthropological studies on culture.

Which strengthens the debate in the dimension of the social issue and other understandings of social and cultural differences, and involves the essential dialogue between redistribution and recognition (Farias et al., 2019; Monzeli, 2022) to offer contributions to a therapy occupational approach that departs from “[...] a posture of combating the structuring antagonist (the social relations that constitute different forms of oppression), building a praxis for anti-oppression” (Farias & Lopes, 2022, p. 4).

In this context, the debate on social occupational therapy along with trans population issues intensifies and even stands as a pioneering field in Brazil, as indicated by the scoping review carried out by Leite Junior & Lopes (2022), pointing out the originality of the article on the subject published by Monzeli et al. (2015), entitled *Between protection, exposure and conditioned admissions: travestilities and sociability spaces (Entre proteção, exposição e admissões condicionadas: travestilidades e espaços de sociabilidade)* – the result of a master's research at PPGTO/UFSCar in dialogue with the field of social occupational therapy.

Works such as those previously mentioned have been contributing to the outline of the debate within social occupational therapy, especially to thinking/doing a practice based on social justice in a two-dimensional way. This is the keynote of the stories that involved the analyses that gave rise to this text, within what the ways of life announce, and social occupational therapy seeks to account for in the life that happens to contribute to a fairer happening in favor of the parity of social and daily participation.

If exposure to subjective and material violence is part of the daily life of trans people – either through the absence or inadequacy of public policies or through the symbolic violence of building a marginal place that repeatedly concerns the “abnormality” of not fitting into the norm (Melo, 2016, 2021), the reconfiguration of support networks is a powerful coping and survival strategy and seeks recognition during gaps in more democratic possibilities for equal access.

This recognition goes through a subjective dimension of self-recognition as part of an identity construct, through objective, affective, and human recognition by peers, and through institutional recognition as a citizen.

In the search for recognition, Talita reconfigures her sociability and, with that, builds livelihood and survival alternatives and, in addition, learns new codes on how to live in a non-normative body. If, in this case, the family is not configured as a protective locus

of its materiality, nor of its subjectivity, the spaces of prostitution remodel its protective and affective limits - as it is possible to perceive in the way that it refers to other trans women with whom he relates in spaces of prostitution, calling them sisters. Recognition, in this sense, is not demanded from the public arena by Talita, becoming possible only within her group but strengthening it for transit in other spaces of social life. These spaces do not expand but their uses are mediated by strategies such as the time of day and the places where one is less exposed to violence, the most possible clothing to be more passable⁸ in certain circulation spaces, body expression, mobilization of companions, and the non-exposure of the family. They are protection strategies that trigger assimilation resources to the norm in an attempt to operationalize life, especially in transits in the public space, and inform us about the importance of recognizing equality and belonging in fostering possibilities for social participation.

Assimilating the norm, for some, in this sense, is configured as a form of the search for recognition in the face of social impositions, which is present in the strategies that Talita mobilizes, but not only this. Marcela also shows us this clearly, for example, when she takes a stand against transvestites and trans women who prostitute themselves, affirming the struggle for the professionalization of sex workers as something that “demoralizes” the group, basing herself on this justification for not standing in favor of the cause.

Sex workers, in Marcela's view, carry symbols that denounce stigma. The interaction between the symbols that the information offers and the perception of those who receive it establishes, in addition to the decoding capacity of those who observe them, the stigma that Marcela wants to get away with as a strategy to minimize the impact of prejudice, even if the confrontation with the norm is not present, emphasizing her search for recognition.

Thus, the narratives described bring, from the concrete needs of life, the importance of the dimension of understanding social justice in these dimensions, including within the social therapeutic-occupational practice, which historically has designed and consolidated theoretical-methodological references to intervene together to groups marked by different forms of oppression in terms of the impossibility of participating in social life.

The stories that we covered throughout the research that subsidize the discussions proposed in this text announce that the system that regulates gender constructions does not operate only as a maker of subjectivity and social places in the experience of transgender people. In addition, experiences in the most different stages of life courses and the most diverse contexts point to practices of resistance and confrontation of the very system that produces their social places and their demands for recognition.

The stigmatization processes experienced by people who, within a given system, do not occur within the hegemonic molds, as is the case of trans people, result in the difficulties and impossibilities of these people regarding their fundamental right to uniqueness, to be able to exercise the right to be, to live and to be respected like all other citizens (Peres & Toledo, 2011). Their existences, through their gender expressions that

⁸According to Duque (2020), passibility can be understood as a regime of (in)visibility in which a set of signs and body technologies are activated to “pass through” a certain identity (here, gender) of according to the permissions and needs that a context or situation demands.

do not conform to binary models, by themselves, already produce confrontations both in the field of redistribution and in the field of recognition.

The absence of democratic possibilities for participation in social life is evident in experiences such as those of Bianca when she strongly brings into her narrative the experience of transvestites marked by the precariousness of life (Butler, 2003)⁹ due to the absence of redistribution policies for this segment populational. The use of transvestites in the plural denotes Bianca's trajectory, which is narrated in the crossing of multiple voices since her experience within the social movement authorizes her, according to herself, to speak on behalf of a collective. The absence of more effective public policies related to access to social rights composes a struggle in which Bianca is located and inserted: the search for recognition and redistribution.

The struggle for redistribution refers to demands for public policies and social rights to struggles for citizenship that translate the concrete demands of these individuals such as according to the National Association of Transvestites and Transsexuals (Associação Nacional de Travestis e Transexuais, 2020), less subaltern possibilities in the labor market, access and permanence strategies for transgender people in educational spaces, policies to combat violence and effective public safety for all, incorporation of debates on gender and sexuality in school curricula, promotion of spaces for sociability, sports, and leisure, respect for the name and social treatment, among others.

Insertion in the labor market as well as circulation in public spaces is a major challenge in the experience of many transgender people such as Talita and Bianca. The difficulty of insertion is the result of a composition that involves the class origin in their life stories, different from the experiences of Dan and Tiago (who entered the job market before their transition) and Marcela's experience (who had access to economic resources that enabled their professional qualification). Despite the stigma permeating the experiences of individuals from multiple social classes, it is within class systems that some coping tools emerge and make some practices possible to be negotiated, hence the need for social policies that aim to minimize the impacts of lack of opportunity and access.

“Having a formal contract”, “steady job” or any other category considered socially worthy adds social value or social esteem to those who carry them (Carvalho, 2015), and their absence or precariousness directly affects the daily lives of transgender people. If in general, in trans experiences, this access is difficult, in Dan's trajectory, it was possible at a time before the gender transition, and its permanence is linked to daily negotiations that he needs to mobilize. Marinho & Almeida (2019, p. 127), in research that addresses the work history of transgender people in the State of Rio de Janeiro, discuss that:

The search for a job insertion via public tender, even if it is not in their training, is much sought after by trans people because of the difficulty of employment in private companies and the aspect of protection of labor rights and guarantees of stability. In addition, regulations on the use of social names in public service are attractive because they equate, at least in large part, the

⁹Judith Butler, in her book “War Frames: When is Life Grievable?”, published in 2015, argues that lives are precarious by nature, and can be purposefully or accidentally eliminated, no matter how hard you try to persist.

processes of social assimilation of their gender identity in the work environment.

Although Dan has a teaching position in public education, and this is a factor that guarantees his insertion in the job market, his permanence involves constantly negotiating his place of respect and acceptance with the other actors involved in his work context in the face of practices that reflect, to a greater or lesser extent, transphobia.

These endless negotiations are mobilized from the discourses appropriated by Dan within the social movement, to reaffirm his place in the context of work, and constitute an apparatus of struggle against the gendered system and the impossibilities that this system translates to trans people concerning demands for recognition and redistribution. This is because, despite the assumed role, Dan still must deal with an ongoing transition process and the non-change (yet) of the name on his record, which “denounces” his place as a trans person. As he states, “[...] *there is no alternative but to resist*”, and this resistance goes, once again, in the direction of the search for recognition.

This struggle for recognition marks the ways of life of trans people to the extent that intelligibility becomes a basic condition of existence. In an interview with psychoanalyst Patrícia Porchat, Judith Butler states that:

When we talked about the field of gender intelligibility, we were talking about existing institutions, categories, and languages that can make sense of gender. Recognition is an intersubjective relationship, and for an individual to recognize the other, he must resort to existing fields of intelligibility. But recognition can also be the place where existing fields of intelligibility are transformed (Knudsen, 2010, p. 168).

She also continues that:

[it is necessary] to mark a position in the field of intelligibility, revise and expand it, so that a new form of recognition is possible. Or the individual may say, “I don't want to be recognized by any of the terms you have,” at which point that field of intelligibility is denied and a critical distance is established. We invoke fields of intelligibility when we recognize others, but we can also rework or resist them during new recognition practices (Knudsen, 2010, p. 168).

Calling this debate to social occupational therapy, it is important to highlight the paths taken to think about social justice by this subarea, within the micro and macrosocial dialectical analysis that, for us, constitutes an essential criticism of the debates that are reduced to progressive neoliberalism. These tend to reduce the discourses of equality to meritocracy, sometimes appearing as a subtly perverse logic that presents as a possible way to think about social justice based on *individual/empty/symbolic empowerment* (Fraser, 2018, 2020; Fernandes, 2020).

The progressive neoliberal program to achieve a just status order did not aim to abolish the social hierarchy but to “diversify” it, “empowering”

“talented” women, people of color, and sexual minorities to rise to the top. And this ideal was inherently class-specific: aimed at ensuring that “deserving” individuals from “underrepresented groups” [can] attain positions of prestige and earning power equal to those of straight white males of their class. The feminist variant says this; but unfortunately, it is not the only one. Focused on “asserting itself” and “breaking the glass ceiling”, its main beneficiaries could only be those who already possessed the necessary social, cultural, and economic capital. All the others would be kept downstairs (Fraser, 2018, p. 47, emphasis added).

Thus, the reading proposed by social occupational therapy, parameterized by the critique of the division between person and group, individual and collective, is strengthened in the face of these perspectives that dispute the conception of social justice, considering that a therapeutic-occupational practice is sought social in favor of promoting the “[...] possibility of strengthening the unique dimension of the person, strengthening at the same time the collective dimension in the sense of belonging” (Barros & Galvani, 2016, p. 107). Therefore, this collective perspective of apprehending the reality of population groups (Malfitano, 2016) brings another substance to the debate around individual empowerment and meritocracy that is not exhausted in the elements of individuals to think the action and, in fact, within the professional limits, intends a practice for social emancipation or social empowerment (Shor & Freire, 1986).

Furthermore, the narratives of trans people bring important elements that return here to what social occupational therapy took as one of the axes of action: citizenship (Lopes, 2016). Within the limits of the articulation of spaces based on social justice, in a capitalist society, citizenship has been consolidated as an important possibility for social occupational therapists, marked by a broader intentionality (Farias & Lopes, 2021) of justice - in the revolutionary idea, but being used within its limits. As stated by Bezerra et al. (2022, p. 11, authors' emphasis), it is essential that professionals “[...] have clarity of the intentionality of their actions, aligning their professional projects with intentional corporate projects aimed at the necessary transformation of the status quo”.

It is pointed out that the challenges are not simply within the capitalist configurations, which, according to Fraser (Fraser et al., 2021) they trigger the care crisis, a consequence of financialized capitalism, of an intensely predatory nature, along with erosion and the collapse of public assistance and social security, “[...] which reflects the severe weakening of public powers caused by a megacorporation, financial institutions and fiscal revolts by the wealthy, resulting in paralysis and underinvestment in essential infrastructure” (Fraser et al., 2021, p. 166). Therefore, directing professional actions with that intentionality is complex and requires occupational therapists to assume conflicts and understand the possible places of subversion (albeit limited) in this logic.

Thus, the stories and ways of living articulated in the narratives of Bianca, Dan, Marcela, Talita, and Tiago announce not only the limits but also the possibilities of articulating *multiple citizenships* as an intentional path toward broader social justice, based on some processes of social transformation. For Lopes (2016), from the place

of citizenship, the *expansion of equality and the recognition of differences* are articulated, social occupational therapy advocates, being a central reading also for trans people.

Final Considerations

As far as we are interested in thinking about the technical action of social occupational therapy, considering citizenship as its articulating axis, the possible paths are preceded by a concern that takes the following question as its central point: How to think practices to promote citizenship when working with people, groups or populations that have, in addition to social rights, their humanity denied?

A therapeutic-occupational action articulated by citizenship founded on the struggle for social justice seems to us to be powerful, above all because it offers, in its foundation, readings about social inequalities and possible paths, the “remedies” that can be mobilized; especially when we talk about populations that, in addition to social rights, have civil rights confronted, questioned and curtailed, not to mention human rights, which transcend struggles for citizenship.

We are not just talking about strengthening social support networks and insertion in the job market; we are talking, above all, about the right to exist and to live together fully. Thus, in this context, struggles for redistribution and recognition are not dissociated and are constantly tensioned, provoked, and woven into a mix between having assured the status of citizenship and the rights that derive from it (redistribution) and, at the same time, the status of free human (recognition). This humanity is crossed by the possibilities of having their existence assured and respected, with the legitimacy of using their bodies in the construction of gender identities, in short, by individual freedoms. This cannot be thought of as detached from the recognition of the State and society in the sense of guaranteeing social minimums, aimed at all who belong and are considered equal. The relationship seems to us to be dialectical and feedback.

If social therapeutic-occupational praxis proposes to technically and politically articulate the *social field*, it is necessary and urgent to understand the multiple ways of life within the limits, possibilities, and tensions of capitalist society, especially the contradictions that involve these realities, within what it says about subjectivity, history, culture, political relations, among other elements, which flow into the daily lives of populations, to build and fight for possibilities of/to live better.

Finally, this journey takes place in walking with the individuals and in effectively dealing with their needs and concrete demands, such as those who inspire us here with their stories, claims, and achievements, to understand social changes and how we can apprehend (or learn from) the tricks that these people use to assert their existence so that perhaps we can print our contributions in the field of care and knowledge production.

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Author's Contributions

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articulation, and writing of the text. Roseli Esquerdo Lopes was responsible for guiding the research and contributed to writing the text. All authors approved the final version of the text.

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