Brazilian occupational apartheid: historical legacy and prospects for occupational therapists

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ABSTRACT

Background: Since the colonization of Brazil in 1500, systemic, institutional, and relational racism has produced inequalities for its black and indigenous people. This legacy perpetuates white supremacy and intensifies social inequalities.
Purpose: This Opinion Piece aims to raise reflexivity on racism in Brazil and its impacts on the occupations of black people within the context of occupational apartheid.
Key issues: We start exploring social justice and occupational justice concepts to map a methodological path for the theoretically informed discussion. Then, we discuss the concept of collective occupations as a possibility for intervention in the face of racial inequalities and introduce some occupational therapy practices to exemplify strategies to tackle the identified challenges.
Implications: We conclude by showing that the field of ethnic-racial relations is still only minimally explored in Brazilian occupational therapy. We also point out some possibilities for further studies in the area.

INTRODUCTION

This piece reflects on the body of ethno-racial studies in Brazil, considering the impact of racism in different occupational areas for black communities. Racism can occur on at least three levels and actions, namely: systemic racism, that which structures society and creates unequal conditions in various spheres of social life; institutional racism that occurs within organizations and institutions and that offers unequal possibilities in the access and enjoyment of products and services; and, finally, relational racism that happens in the context of interpersonal relationships and refers to values and beliefs internalized by each person[1]. With an understanding that racism is a problem that affects the black and indigenous Brazilian population and produces inequalities and daily deprivations in life, we reflect on occupational justice and racism in the Brazilian context through the experiences of occupational therapists working with the black population.

In the first part of the text, we present a historical-social overview on how racism was instituted in Brazil by the Portuguese invasion and the enslavement of black Africans. We highlight the myth of racial democracy and veiled racism. We then discuss aspects of the concepts of social justice and occupational justice, considering how these concepts have been incorporated into Brazilian occupational therapy. In the third part, we approach the concept of occupational apartheid, linking the processes of racially informed exclusion in Brazil to their impact on the occupations of black people. We then present occupational therapists experiences with black populations to demonstrate opportunities for action in the face of racial inequalities. Finally, we recommend an antiracist plan, for the future, identifying perspectives for occupational therapists to be actively involved.

Racism in Brazil

Directly influenced by a mythological/ontological perspective of a superior race, the central countries of Europe inaugurated the theft of lands beyond the Atlantic, aiming to expand their civilization ideals and fortify their space of power[2]. Ways of understanding and organizing society are initiated through excluding previous power structures, aiming at the hegemony of the colonial nations[3]. Colonialism was consolidated in

a system of ideological, political, and economic domination of natural resources and enslaved labour, subjugating indigenous and black populations, and strengthening white supremacy[4]. Ideological discourses of social functioning were (and still are) produced in forged societies, implying patterns of civil normality that are aligned with the white male European, bourgeois, hetero-cisnormative, Christian, urban, and ableist profiles [3, 4].

Achille Mbembe[5] reflects on the mechanisms of colonial power, which operate for the deprivation of humanity of non-whites in everyday relationships, reducing them to indignation and death. As well, the access to opportunities for these racial groups is denied, on the grounds that they are incapable and inferior. Mbembe[5] defines this process as necropolitics. In the case of the Brazilian State, several forms of control, values, rules of sociability and policies are instituted to legitimize conditions of subordination and/or massive elimination of blacks as a legacy of the colonial paradigm. The social norms are upheld and disguised by meritocratic perspectives which govern a kind of "naturalized inferiorisation" of people of colour. Brazilian racism organizes social relations, reinforcing a system of focus on the wealthy, determining social classes, and racializing everyday life. As a result of this social-historical development, the servile characteristics of subaltern classes are imposed upon, become naturalized[6]. Dependent on a strong hierarchical and classificatory model of social organization arising from the Iberian region, racism in Brazil presents itself as a fundamental pillar for the construction of a progressive nation. This organization model mirrors and is aimed at the example of prosperity and well-being of the great metropolises, conveyed by a rigid hierarchy of races[4, 7].

According to Campos[8], the concepts around racism in the social sciences originate from different theoretical frameworks based on ideologies, principles, and structures that attempt to understand the phenomenon in its entirety. The proponents of these frameworks do not always build on, or consult with, each other, resulting in a fragmented body of scholarly work. However, even with these differences, Campos highlights that "each racism can only be understood from its own history" (Guimarães apud Campos[8:2], original in Portuguese).

To understand this phenomenon in the Brazilian context, we turn to Lélia Gonzalez, a Brazilian scholar who suggests the term "Brazilian-style racism" to explain racist practices in the country and differentiate it from other nations[4]. Racism in Brazil comes from a colonization strategy through which the colonialists encouraged and justified the internalization of racism, naturalizing it to guarantee the perception of the superiority of the colonizer over the colonized[4]. As proof of the success of this tactic of oppression, Brazilian racism presents itself in two ways: open, which would be the guarantee of racial purity through the explicit segregation of non-white groups; and disguised or by denial, characteristic of Latin American colonies, in which theories of miscegenation are encouraged to achieve ethnic cleansing through whitening[4]. Racism by denial is the most sophisticated and perverse way of keeping non-white peoples in a subordinate position, as it guarantees alienation through the naturalization of the whites as a dominant group and the non-whites as inferior. It also guarantees the confusion of national identity and subjectivities with the desire to 'whiten', in which the blacks begin to deny their own ethnic identity[4].

From the country's desire to achieve Eurocentric modernity in the mid-19th century, miscegenation became a problem for the state, which, through scientific, naturalist, positivist and evolutionist postulates, would distinguish terms of 'black' and 'indigenous' as differing elements[7]. At the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, when ideas of non-white people as belonging to Brazilian society took place, miscegenation became strengthened as an affirmation of national identification in the fusion of the three races, although always keeping the whites in a superior position[7].

These excluding and dichotomous configurations around ethnic-racial elements cement the constitution of Brazilian society. In summary, the denial of racism in Brazil was and still is a political project of institution and control of national identity, aiming at a progressive ideology of modernity. Based on supposed racial equality denunciations of oppression motivated by race and the struggle for black protagonists are concealed through the eugenic precept that all citizens enjoy the same rights, while the granting of social privileges falls truly only to whites[4,6]. According to Florestan Fernandes[9], an important Brazilian sociologist, after the abolishment of slavery, the black population was left to fend for themselves, without remedial public policies, income sources, housing support, education, and any other resources for attainment of basic human rights.

Concerning social and political participation, even after the abolishment of slavery, in 1888, blacks were denied the right to vote. Although the Brazilian Constitution of 1824 did not prevent black people from voting, there were strict rules about who could vote: voters should be male, free from slavery, landowners, and have financial assets[10]. Eventually, in 1881, the so-called Saraiva Law determined that people who did not have high financial assets could also vote, but only if they were literate and professionally well established[10]. Later, as a result of extreme social unrest and black movements' advocacy, the Constitution of 1981 determined that anyone could vote, except the homeless and illiterate individuals[10]. It must be noted that even 'free' black people were mostly without a home or land, and were prohibited from obtaining basic education [9-11]. On the contrary, white men, mostly immigrants, were able to vote. Civil rights were only granted to black individuals more than 180 years after the abolition of slavery, through the Constitution of 1988, the current Brazilian Constitution. Also, for the first half of the 20th century, the Brazilian government encouraged and financed European immigration to occupy workplaces to avoid benefiting Brazilian-born black people[9]. Simultaneously, controlling policies were created by the legal system based on eugenic theories, mainly spread by physicians, which stated that black people were born with mental disorders prone to criminal activiy[12].

Although 'apartheid' has not been an explicit state policy in Brazil, there were many laws and policies that promoted marginalization, alienation, and the violation of the dignity of black people. Consequently, black areas were built around the large industrial urban centres, in order to somehow protect blacks from constant harassment[11]. Black culture, religious rites, music, dance, and other black expressions were limited to these marginalized territories[11]. Brazilian black people were forced to settle in precarious territories without work, education, and housing, where violence, extreme poverty and hunger constituted everyday life.

Currently, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) is responsible for carrying out a sociodemographic census of the Brazilian population. In 2019, IBGE identified racial inequalities in several fields: educational levels, access to health, housing, basic sanitation, work and income, political rights, safety, exposure to violence, and high children and young adult mortality, among others. In relation to the distribution of income in 2018, 15.4% of the white population and 32.9% of the black population of Brazil earned less than U$5.50/day. Conversely, 3.2% of white people received less than U$1.90/day, compared to 8.8% of the black population13. Illiteracy rates were three times higher among black people than among white people and white men and women made up more that 75% of the elected political representatives13.

In addition, black people constituted 66% of the unemployed and displaced – with black women in the majority. At least 44% of the black homes lack one of the three basic elements of sanitation: garbage collection, sewage treatment, or clean water supply. The rate of intentional homicide is 2.7 times higher in the black population[13]. In 2020, the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic evidenced further racial inequalities. For example, due to limited access to health services, the deathrate and vaccination rates among the black population have been three times greater and smaller respectively as compared to their white counterparts. Not surprisingly, black people face more unemployment: of the total of 8.9 million unemployed people, 6.4 million (or 72%) are black men and women[14].

Obviously, Brazilian black people still suffer from inequity, exclusion, and marginalization. These examples expose how racial inequalities affect several fields and impact on occupational choices, occupational engagement, and occupational opportunities for the black population[15].

The impact of a history of racism on social and occupational justice

since 1970, occupational therapists in Brazil have incorporated theoretical frameworks from the Human and Social Sciences16 in their day-to-day practice. The growing global social inequalities in the 20th century have brought these questions to the occupational therapy fields of intervention and knowledge[17] and have prompted the adoption of critical-reflexive perspectives to identify actions that could enact full citizenship and fight inequities16. Thus, revisiting concepts in/for Brazilian occupational therapy has become an important task in view of the complexity of social vulnerabilities that have arisen in the globalized world[17].

Since the military rule in Brazil from the 1960s to the 1990, 'social justice', 'full citizenship' and 'human rights' are concepts that are receiving attention in especially the community, social and cultural practical contexts, and are guiding critical perspectives on the actions required from occupational therapists[17]. The articulation of these concepts in Brazil has sparked the analysis of the social problems experienced in the daily lives and occupations of people and groups in the face of social disparities which arise from the power dynamics produced by capitalism[17,18]. As a result, professional practices and the construction of knowledge by some groups are aimed at promoting justice and social rights for the inclusion and social participation of people and communities that experience vulnerability on a daily basis[18]. It is understood then that social justice is related to the processes of social inequalities, which may manifest themselves in different areas of occupational life, and vary in range, depending on the sum of vulnerabilities and support networks[18].

In the international context, Townsend and Wilcock[19] theorized about occupational justice, which advocates for the fair distribution of resources and rights that will allow all human beings to perform their meaningful occupations, ensuring that everyone can, in a fair way, explore their occupational potential equitably and satisfactorily, favouring personal and collective well-being for all[19]. Likewise, according to the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, access to occupations is a fundamental right and people must enjoy guarantees that allow them to engage in occupations that provide both individual and collective well-being[20,21].

Occupational justice and injustice therefore constitute opposite poles, occupational justice being the full, equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, while occupational injustice constitutes the inequality of this distribution, privileging certain groups to the detriment of others[22].

Townsend & Marval[21] argue that a population living in extreme poverty is one of the groups most affected by occupational injustices, as there are few public, social, financial and educational policies that guarantee their development. Although we agree with this statement, we intend, in the next sections, to position ourselves critically from an ethnic-racial standpoint. We understand that an ethnic-racial perspective - before placing poverty at the centre of the problem - reiterates the impact of colonization, exploitation, and enslavement of people and communities, for which we must emphasize the historical trauma and the legacy of pain and outrage these processes inflicted.

The five forms of occupational injustice that can be used as a framework for understanding the impact of a history of racism on occupational participation in Brazil are: (1) occupational deprivation; (2) occupational imbalance; (3) occupational alienation; (4) occupational marginalization and (5) occupational apartheid[20]. In this article, we will be focusing on 'occupational apartheid' as the lens through which we approach our analysis, since, again, we consider racial inequality in Brazil a central element in the production of our pervasive social disparities.

From social justice to occupational apartheid

Debates around the concept of social justice emphasize full citizenship and human, social and universal rights. However, the concept of social justice has been linked to liberal ideals that perceive social justice as opportunities allied to individual freedoms[23]. Bailliard, Carroll and Peak[24] problematize that the main theories around the concept of occupational justice and social justice advocate neutrality, in reference to socio-political issues, as well as universality, neglecting the differences between people.

> "Yet claims of impartiality are impossible, as we cannot separate ourselves from the biases of our embodied sociocultural experiences or our respective intentions. In the United States, dominant institutional structures in education and government, deluded by the possibility of impartiality, canonized the perspective and experiences of the privileged dominant group (i.e., white Anglo-Saxon Protestants) to be positioned as universal, thus denying the possibility of difference"[24:4-5].

From an epistemic perspective that articulates the so-called 'Global South', occupational justice can be situated from the discussions held in Latin America and occupational therapists from the South. According to Guajardo Córdoba[25], processes of exploitation, enslavement, and genocide of natives and blacks that took place in the global South bequeathed us a past of injustices that remain in operation, albeit with new characteristics. Even with the emancipation of the Americas and part of Africa through independence movements, many countries still suffer the impacts of colonization, including land disputes, religious rights, language restrictions, and so on[25, 26]. Therefore, authors from Latin American, African and Asian countries have advocated for an anti-racist, anti-hetero cisgender patriarchal and anti-colonial occupational therapy, which considers the plurality of knowledges, as well as assuring a leading role for groups whose voices have long been silenced and whose places of speech are still denied [25-28] .

Beagan et al.[29] point out that in occupational therapy, the scholarly work on occupations in relation to colonial oppression is incipient, especially considering race. Commonly, occupations are conceptualized based on Northern-Western perspectives, resulting in the marginalization and invisibility of non-white groups[29,30]. According to Lee[28], the perspectives on occupation are based on western epistemologies around the world. In colonized countries, it is common for occupational participation and engagement to be measured by these perspectives. Thus, participation in traditional occupations, original occupational, traditional culture, does not fit into standardizer protocols and procedures[28]. In Brazil, African-Brazilian and indigenous occupations and culture are usually considerer inferior and not sufficient as valid, normative, and satisfying cultural forms of occupation[4,12,15,26,28].

In their research, Beagan et al.[29] interviewed black occupational therapists who talked about their experience around racism. The authors found that facing racism is a naturalized phenomenon inside professional practices (i.e., racial violence from patients, colleagues, and managers; exclusion from social events; loneliness etc.). From this, the authors inferred that black occupational therapists exhibited distinct strategies to fight against systemic racism: "Coping, surviving, is often all that is possible; sometimes people find the energy to resist, collectively and/or individually— and there are usually costs, particularly in terms of stereotyping and scapegoating." [29:7]. In their study, quite unique within the field, the authors identified contradictory perspectives: Some participants absolved others from blame, for example, suggesting that if you just respond the right way, you can end the racist comments and innuendos. Some suggested racism signalled ignorance: "I am not blaming them... they lack the awareness"[29:7]. Not surprisingly, the black therapists also reported avoidance or withdrawal to preserve themselves29. Thus, although still developing, recent literature suggests that occupational therapists, especially white professionals31, must develop skills to identify and analyse the impact of racism on human occupations and the underpinnings of collective engagement in the coping and resistance dynamics [29].

Hammell[32], one of the critics of the concept of occupational justice, reiterates her privileged place as a white, cisgender, heterosexual woman, as well as an Anglo-Canadian dual citizen, to reflect on the notions of justice that have been produced in the Global North. The author understands that human beings must have the right to carry out their occupations, regardless of race/ethnicity, social class, religion, gender, and sexuality, among other aspects. The denial of these rights is configured as occupational injustice. However, Hammell shows that the fortuitous division of types of injustice brings us other problems; after all, since we run the risk of segregating and/or leaving out different oppressions that happen simultaneously and structurally in society. For Hammell, the focus should be on the negative impacts of injustice on health and well-being, rather than on their typification. However, the author suggests that the only scholarly construct that makes sense to maintain is occupational apartheid, which has a well-rounded definition and can help us understand very well-marked processes of ethnic-racial exclusion in societies[32].

Originally defined by Frank Kronenberg and Nick Pollard[33], occupational apartheid is systematic, political, social, cultural, and economic segregation that impacts health and the occupations of people and collectives, and it occurs:

> "..by restricting or denying access to dignified and meaningful participation in the occupations of daily living, based on race, colour, disability, origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, social status, or other characteristics"[33:67].

The concept of occupational apartheid in Brazil has been adopted to discuss the processes of inequalities directed to racialized groups, such as, for example, urban black youth, *quilombola*[1] populations, native peoples and traditional

[1] Quilombolas are people who live in Quilombos. Quilombos is a black community, which was formed by ex-slaves. In Brazil, commonly those communities are located in rural fields which are protect by public policies.

communities, among others[34-36], understanding that in the context of colonial subalternity, these groups face limitations in their occupations that do not satisfy their very basic needs. Ambrosio15 emphasizes that even in contexts where precarious conditions of class and geographic location are similar for different groups, identity marks such as race, gender and sexuality are promoters of inequality between people.

Apartheid, a word that means "racial segregation of any kind", was instituted in the 17th century in South Africa by a white European colonizing minority. In the United States and South Africa, laws that legitimized racial separatism made this segregation official. Thus, black people were not considered citizens, did not have the right to vote, interracial marriage was prohibited, and white and non-white people could not frequent the same places. This racial hierarchy prevented non-white people from enjoying their rights[37]. Despite worldwide demonstrations against apartheid, both the associations of occupational therapists in South Africa and the United States, as well as the WFOT, for years remained silent and adopted supposed neutrality regarding the marginalization of black people[38].

Although there were no official apartheid laws in Brazil, scholars of ethno-racial relations point to state policies that legally promoted racial segregation[12,39]. From opening policies for European salaried labour to legislation inscribed in the Brazilian penal code, there were explicit strategies of whitening the population, racial control and open black genocide[39]. It is worth remembering, for example, the figure of Nina Rodrigues, a Brazilian doctor, white and oligarch, who played a large role in the consolidation of segregationist policies. His propositions concealed explicit apartheid and fostered the creation of the myth of racial democracy, which would mark the passage from an imperial state to a republican state with liberal bases under the sign of individual equality[12].

> "Anticipating this problem, it bets on the strategy of establishing social control in practice, in everyday life, through a punitive system, which will often take place at the hands of the authorities who manage daily life: medical authorities, police authorities, judicial authorities. This is the focus of Nina Rodrigues' thinking"[12:138] (original in Portuguese)

> "Apparently, there was not, at least not in a massive and institutionalized way in all fields of social life, a proper apartheid regime, as it was being established in Anglo-Saxon colonization societies, but we had a scientific legitimation for the maintenance of a citizenship exclusionary"[12:139] (original in Portuguese).

The newly crafted Federal Constitution[40] provides that all Brazilians are equal before the law. However, in the Brazilian context this equality is still non-existent. This is evident in the current scenario of the coronavirus pandemic, which records disparities in the mortality and morbidity of whites and blacks[41]. The existence of places frequented only by white people and others where only black people are allowed; as well as groups protected by the police while black persons are victims of constant harassment and murder. These are but a few examples of processes that can be understood as a Brazilian style apartheid, according to Lélia Gonzalez[4]. It seems that it might not be an apartheid regulated by law, like in the South African and American contexts. Still, it can be described as disguised apartheid tolerated in many social practices in Brazil[39]. Based on this reading of Brazilian historical, social, and political processes, although we cannot configure a Brazilian apartheid instituted by legislation, the impacts of covert separation, which affect the majority of the Brazilian black population, are clear.

Collective occupations as a means toward occupational justice

We have already noted that social justice and occupational justice concepts stem from liberal and universalist ideals[23,24]. Contrarily, authors have proposed interventions based on the idea of collective occupations, seeking to confront occupational apartheid. For Ramungondo & Kronenberg[42], collective occupations are:

> "Occupations carried out by individuals, groups, communities and/or societies in everyday contexts; these may reflect an intention of social cohesion or dysfunction and/or advancement or aversion to a common good. Collective occupations can have consequences that benefit some populations and not others."[42:10]

Ramungondo and Kronenberg[42] argue that collective occupations can represent a continuum between relations of oppression and freedom, especially within minority groups. According to the authors, it is important to understand that occupations are social constructs and, therefore, represent forms of organization of societies reflecting dynamics of power and privilege of certain groups, to the detriment of others[42].

In the historical-social-cultural constitution of black Brazilian occupations, the processes of enslavement are central in the production of inequalities, indignant experiences, and genocide[43]. The slave period, which lasted for almost 300 years in Brazil, represents more than half of the history of the presence of black people in the country. From this perspective, as a subordinated group, the black population is constituted through the restriction of significant occupations, notably collective ones, to serve and meet the impositions of the white group. As we mentioned earlier, based on IBGE's[14] census data, Brazilian racial inequality is easily identifiable within several social indicators such as unemployment, mortality, incarceration, school dropout, salary disparities, access to basic sanitation, human right violations, and food insecurity among others. As Galvaan[44] would emphasize, the situated nature of occupational choice is undoubtedly linked to the social environment and its discursive practices, which must be considered when it comes to occupational justice and its underpinnings.

Considering that the occupational demands of black people in Brazil vary considerably – educational, work and income, mobility, housing, health, food security, religious and cultural freedom, among others, there is a vast field for the work of occupational therapists. Thus, collective actions can

offer an expanded approach that understands and problematizes the limitations that occupational injustices cause in social life. Conversely, it is necessary to look beyond the clinical settings, the traditional dichotomy between health and illness, and to pay attention to the context and environment in which the persons live[25,32,42,45].

Brazilian occupational therapists' practices are mostly colour and ethnically "neutral" to date. This is due to many factors, especially the lack of cultural safety awareness within educational programs and the pervasive disguising measures that render racist exchanges invisible, as explained earlier[14]. We must then concede that occupational therapy interventions with black populations based on community and collective perspectives, mindful of the ethnic-racial identities, are still incipient in Brazil, even though the black population represent the majority of the Brazilian demographics. Nevertheless, in the next section we offer some recent examples, which show encouraging actions, despite the adverse conditions. Below, we will present some examples of interventions based on collective occupations.

Examples of interventions based on collective occupations by occupational therapists to facilitate occupational justice

In the context of affirmative actions, Andrade et al.46 propose an occupational therapy intervention with a group of black undergraduate students to offer better conditions for academic performance. Through collective activities, the authors applied artistic and cultural resources to rescue, value and empower black students in the university context, in the face of oppression caused by racist strategies imposed by white supremacy[46]. Ambrosio et al.[34] presented an occupational therapeutic process carried out in an institution that cared for adolescents and young people with intellectual disabilities based on collective artistic and cultural experiments of Afro-Brazilian matrices. Faced with the racism experienced in the institution daily life, the authors designed a set of activities to promote ethnic-cultural valorisation through essentially Afro-Brazilian cultural collective occupations, such as dances, hair braiding, tying turbans, etc. The authors attest that collective experimentation impacted young socialization, promoting relationships based on respect in the face of racial diversities. The experience also produced institutional impacts on providing care by mostly white professionals to a predominantly black group of youths[15].

Silva[36] described the work in a quilombola community in the interior of the State of Bahia, which had gone through a process of eviction after flooding caused by the construction of dams. The context was very controversial, as the community was not involved nor consulted in the relocation measures. For Silva, activities to recover memories and honoured traditions of the community could be achieved through collective action to face the situation of homelessness and lack of support[36]. When discussing the black diasporas in Brazil and understanding the processes of collective displacement of black groups for the formation of quilombos, the author points out strategies of resistance displayed in collective and community occupations.

We can also cite works by occupational therapists who propose appreciating black Brazilian cultures through collective artistic and cultural activities, especially self-expression through Hip hops[47]. Hip Hop, as a black cultural expression, has been claimed as an advocacy strategy, a denunciation of oppressive situations, but also as an expression of the body and a reminder of people's struggles and survival accomplishments[47]. Pereira et al.[28] describe similar processes in the study developed within a female prison system, with self-declared black and brown women. Collective activities and iconographic resources favoured empowerment, increased occupational repertoire, remembrance of life stories, engagement in meaningful occupations, and the construction of personal and collective identities. Although not complete, these examples can offer great insights on the opportunities for work in this field.

Inclusive social engagement from an ethnical racial standpoint

Racism has produced inequalities in Brazil since its constitution as a country. Here, black people continue to be kept on subaltern spaces, and their occupations' precariousness is evident. Occupational apartheid provides us with tools to make racial oppressions visible and to reveal the structures of domination imposed by colonial, patriarchal, heterosexual, and ableist systems that privilege certain groups over others. As action strategies for occupational therapy, collective occupations can be used help marginalize black people understand their collective story as a people. Collective interventions are powerful tools for the transformation of individual logics in favour of the collectivization of resistance processes.

The field of occupations for black people, as well as the regimes of control and deprivation of black occupations are still little explored but, in view of the proposed discussions, there is no doubt that these are urgent themes for overcoming the historical discriminatory and racist legacy of Brazilian occupational therapy.

Step-by-step guide to occupational therapy intervention in collective occupations:

- Identify perspectives, epistemologies, worldviews that guide perceptions about life, everyday life, and occupation.
- Recognize ethno-knowledge about care, health, and well-being.
- Recognize traditional occupations as an essential occupation to promote belonging, sociability, and social participation.
- Recognize, confront and address social structures of exclusion using government strategies and legal resources to ensure access to dignified community living conditions.
- Ensure community and representative participation in political decisions, such as participatory planning strategies.
- Promote actions to preserve and enhance collective memories, ancestry, and cultural diversity.

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