

Review Article

Life project and occupational therapy: some assumptions and a mapping for meetings

Projeto de vida e terapia ocupacional: alguns pressupostos e um mapeamento para encontros

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Abstract

In Brazil, Basic Education, through the establishment of the National Common Curricular Base, in 2018, incorporated the notion of life project as a curricular component. However, some states had already introduced the subject “Life Project” in public schools since the second decade of the 2000s, as occurred in the Comprehensive Education Program of the State of São Paulo, which delegates to high school the function of subsidizing young people in the construction of their life projects. Several areas of knowledge show interest in the notion/category of life project, including occupational therapy. This study sought to understand under what assumptions and theoretical contributions occupational therapists have based their research and technical actions when approaching the theme “life project”. To this end, a mapping review was carried out in the SciELO library, in the periodicals *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, *Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo* and *Revista Interinstitucional de Terapia Ocupacional* and in the *Biblioteca Brasileira de Teses* and Dissertations, in an open period, until January 2024. 38 texts that articulated “occupational therapy” and “life/future project” were gathered. The set of data gathered and its analysis led to the elaboration of three thematic axes that configured and delimited the ways in which occupational therapists use and problematize the theme, with prevailing practices aimed at (re)constructing the life projects of the public for which they are therapeutic-occupational actions return. There is also a predominance of this discussion in the productions of the subareas “social occupational therapy” and “occupational therapy in mental health”.

Keywords: Projects, Occupational Therapy, High School.

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Resumo

No Brasil, a Educação Básica, mediante o estabelecimento da Base Nacional Comum Curricular, em 2018, incorporou a noção de projeto de vida como um componente curricular. Todavia, alguns estados já haviam introduzido a disciplina “Projeto de Vida” nas escolas públicas desde a segunda década dos anos 2000, como ocorreu no Programa Ensino Integral do Estado de São Paulo, que delega ao Ensino Médio a função de subsidiar jovens na construção de seus projetos de vida. Diversas áreas do conhecimento demonstram interesse na noção/categoria projeto de vida, entre as quais a terapia ocupacional. Este estudo buscou apreender sob quais pressupostos e aportes teóricos terapeutas ocupacionais têm embasado suas pesquisas e ações técnicas ao abordarem a temática “projeto de vida”. Para tanto, realizou-se uma revisão de mapeamento na biblioteca *SciELO*, nos periódicos *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, *Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo* e *Revista Interinstitucional de Terapia Ocupacional* e na *Biblioteca Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações*, em período aberto, até janeiro de 2024. Foram reunidos 38 textos que articulavam “terapia ocupacional” e “projeto de vida/projeto de futuro”. O conjunto de dados reunidos e sua análise levaram à elaboração de três eixos temáticos que configuraram e delimitaram as formas pelas quais terapeutas ocupacionais utilizam e problematizam a temática, tendo prevalecido práticas voltadas à (re)construção dos projetos de vida do público para o qual se voltam ações terapêutico-ocupacionais. Pontua-se, ainda, um predomínio em torno dessa discussão nas produções das subáreas “terapia ocupacional social” e “terapia ocupacional na saúde mental”.

Palavras-chave: Projetos, Terapia Ocupacional, Educação Básica.

Introduction

This article is part of a research that integrated a doctoral thesis on the interface between education and social occupational therapy, with the purpose of producing subsidies for the “Life Project” curricular component, present in some state educational programs in Brazil, in different formats, since the second decade of the 2000s, such as in the Integral Education Program of the state of São Paulo and, more recently, in the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) of the so-called “New Secondary Education”, sanctioned in 2018.

Regarding this level of education, a part of our studies, the BNCC proposal suggests that young people define their life projects at the beginning of this stage and have support from the school to develop skills that make their execution viable (Brasil, 2018). This choice should guide their training itineraries, seen as a strategy to make their curricular organization more flexible, and can be aimed at academic deepening of the areas of knowledge recommended by the BNCC and/or professional technical training, depending on the reality where the schools are located, the “desires of the school community” and the “physical, material and human resources of school networks and institutions” (Brasil, 2018, p. 678).

It is important to consider the complexity of this proposal, especially the ambiguity it carries, since the proposition of life projection always has the potential to serve the

reflection of real living conditions, ethical values and personal choices in an autonomous and liberating way, from the in the same way that it can act in the service of certain moral and world conceptions and lead subjects to immobility and maintenance of the status quo. Also, understanding the multiple relationships that occupational therapists have established with education, including action to (re)construct life projects (Pereira et al., 2021), this study sought to understand under what assumptions and contributions occupational therapist theorists have supported their research and technical actions that address the theme “life project”.

Assumptions for Understanding Life Projects

Different areas of knowledge, such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, administration and education, have shown interest in the “life project” category for some time (Sousa & Alves, 2019). Occupational therapy, in its various subareas, has also approached this construct, such as social occupational therapy, which has been discussing this topic linked, mainly, to the education of young people in public schools. According to Pan et al. (2022) and Lopes et al. (2014, p. 599), the project is a consequence of the therapeutic-occupational intervention process provided by *Activities, Dynamics and Projects Workshop*, which are social technologies that “have been put into practice for more than a decade by the METUIA Project¹”. Pan et al. (2022, p. 104) state that “the meeting and exchanges made possible by the *Workshop* space allow the idealization and construction of joint, singular, individual or collective projects”.

According to the philosopher Boutinet (2002), the term “project” is a recent invention in our culture, while, in some languages, there is not even a homologue for it. According to the author, in terms of vocabulary, the Greeks and Latins ignored the word corresponding to the modern concept of project, which comprises a combination of design and objective. For the ancient Greeks, there was no precise equivalent for the term, only the differentiation of a moral choice from a choice oriented towards a determined objective.

It is only in the 15th century that the term “project” appears regularly, in the forms of *pourjet* and *project*, referring to spatial order, linked to the verb *projicio*, of Latin origin, which means “to throw forward, to expel” (Boutinet, 2002, p. 34). In France, these terms were linked to architecture², referring to objects thrown forward such as balconies and pillars. For Machado (2016), a Brazilian theorist linked to the area of education, when human beings are born, they are launched into the world as a jet of life and constitute themselves as a person while developing the ability to anticipate actions, select goals and dedicate themselves within their reach, considering their own life as a project.

¹ In action since 1998, it is currently called Rede Metuia – Terapia Ocupacional Social, consisting of seven active centers in different regions of Brazil, UFSCar, in São Carlos (SP), USP, in São Paulo (SP), that of the Universidade Federal de São Paulo, in Santos (SP), that of the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, in Vitória (ES), that of the Universidade Federal da Paraíba, in João Pessoa (PB), that of the Universidade Estadual de Ciências da Saúde de Alagoas, in Maceió (AL), and that of the Universidade de Brasília, in Ceilândia (DF). “In a non-nuclear way, other researchers and professionals also participate in this network” (Lopes et al., 2023, p. 329).

² The history of the concept of design in architecture is linked to the importance of spatial notion and anticipation, the anticipatory design of the work to be built, the connection between conception and realization (Boutinet, 2002).

Simone de Beauvoir (2005, p. 40), using concepts elaborated by Jean Paul Sartre, in 1943, in the book “being and nothingness” reports that people throw themselves “into the world making themselves lacking being” and go building meanings for life through the process of revealing the world. This unveiling occurs through systematized choices and renunciations within the scope of projects, which are developed in a natural movement of existence. According to the author (p. 32), only the individual is able to “save their existence” and, to do so, “their original spontaneity must rise to the height of a moral freedom taken in itself as an end through the unveiling of unique content”. In general terms, this singular content is the project of existence, a constant search for becoming, as “freedom should not seek to capture being, but to reveal it; unveiling is the passage from being to existence” and the intended goal “is to conquer existence through the always missing thickness of being”. In summary, Beauvoir (2005) correlates human existence with the process of projecting oneself.

Boutinet (2002) points out that the notion of project was foreign to medieval thought, a period demarcated by agrarian, repetitive time, in which the present was the re-actualization of the past and individuals were immersed in a Hebrew mentality, based on Judeo-Christian history, centered on God. With the advent of the century of enlightenment and the space occupied by the Enlightenment, “next to, even in the place of God, man establishes himself as an agent of history” (Boutinet, 2002, p. 38). It is at this point, according to the author, that progress and the project meet, precisely “to testify to man's ability to make history and, through it, his deep desire to fulfill himself by claiming to be a creator”. Therefore, it was the philosophers and thinkers of the Enlightenment, eager for emancipation and progress, who began to conceptualize the word project as we understand it today. It was also during this period that the construct “project” began to be incorporated into what was being understood as social progress.

In this sense, project and progress are central concepts for the construction of Modernity, in which relationships are mediated by technical time, no longer divine time (Sousa & Alves, 2019). However, until the beginning of the 19th century, the concept of project was considered floating, elusive, and only in the second half of that century did some philosophers turn to the elaboration of the notion of intentionality. Despite this, the correlation between intentionality and the idea of project gained visibility in philosophical productions only at the beginning of the 20th century. To explain this relationship, Boutinet (2002) turns to Brentano (1874; 1944), for whom intentionality is the essence of consciousness. Therefore, the first author (p. 49) explains that “project and intentionality maintain close links, insofar as they constitute the two privileged manifestations of a consciousness that is intended to be targeted”.

According to Beauvoir (2005), without engaging in a project of existence, individuals are just a presence in the world:

An existence could not be founded if it collapsed moment by moment into nothingness; this is why no moral question arises for the child as long as they are still incapable of recognizing themselves in the past, of foreseeing themselves in the future; it is only when the moments of her life begin to organize themselves as behavior that they can decide to choose. Specifically, it is through their patience, courage and fidelity that the value of the chosen end is confirmed, and that the authenticity of the choice is reciprocally manifested.

If I leave behind me an act that I performed, when it falls into the past it becomes a thing, it is nothing more than a stupid and opaque fact; To prevent this metamorphosis, I must constantly revisit and justify it in the unity of the project in which I am engaged (Beauvoir, 2005, p. 28).

In Brazil, Freire (2019) seems to adopt Beauvoir's (2005) approach by recognizing human historicity as the foundation of education as a practice of freedom and the project as hope for the future. According to the author, problematizing education, which aims at human freedom, recognizes that beings are unfinished, that they are being in and with a historical reality that is also unfinished. Therefore, education must be a permanent task, a constant process of "*being and being*", in which individuals identify continuity, future and existence:

Beings beyond themselves – like “projects” -, like beings that walk forward, that look ahead; as beings whom immobility threatens with death; for those who look back should not be a nostalgic way of wanting to go back, but a way of better knowing what is happening, to better build the future (Freire, 2019, p. 103).

Other Brazilian researchers who focused on the study of the notion/idea of design, in different aspects, such as the anthropologist Velho (2004) and the education, psychology and sociology scientist Weller (2014), use the concept described by Alfred Schutz, to who the term designates an “organized conduct to achieve specific purposes” (Weller, 2014, p. 139) and “when there is action with some predetermined objective, there will be a project” (Velho, 2004, p. 27). It is important to highlight that Alfred Schutz is a philosopher and sociologist dedicated to the study of phenomenology and that this area of knowledge considers the project an important dimension of people's lives in the process involving the future (Schneider et al., 2021).

Taking the link between project and intentionality by Boutinet (2002) and project and engagement by Beauvoir (2005), we bring to reflection the idea of project, individual and individual choice, by Velho (2004, p. 25), in which “the basis, the starting point for thinking about a project” is understanding the possibility of choice for individuals. However, when problematizing the notion of individual, Velho (2008) cites Dumont (1970), to point out that the contemporary notion of individual would be totally subordinated, including by religion, which culturally dominated the Western Middle Ages. However, he points out numerous possibilities for societies in which the process of individualization is possible, such as the messianic prophets and leaders, who live radical individualizing experiences. However, he states that, in modern industrial societies, considered individualistic, there are “de-individualizing dimensions and instances”, such as religion itself, certain institutions, the family and the professional career (Velho, 2008, p. 25-26).

At this point, we return to Beauvoir's (2005) ideas regarding the author's explanation of the individual choice of “salvation” of existence, which occurs through the unveiling of the world in a singular way. This singularity with which individuals discover the world, actively seeking *becoming*, in our understanding, is the need for conscious subjects to individually decide their own projects, understanding their historicity and

that of the world, which are being jointly (Freire, 2019). According to Beauvoir (2005), the singularity of the project determines the limitation of the power of individuals, but also provides support for its foundation, a duality that supports engagement or not with the world, as the author explains:

In fact, so that my freedom does not run the risk of dying against the obstacle raised by its own commitment, so that it can still continue its movement through failure, it is necessary that, giving itself a singular content, it aims through from him to an end that is not anything, but precisely the free movement of existence. [...] However, such salvation is only possible if, despite obstacles and failures, a man maintains the disposition of his future, if the situation still opens up possibilities for him (Beauvoir, 2005, p. 30).

Beauvoir (2005) links future possibilities to a positive existence, reporting that, when individuals are separated from their goals, they lose power over the objects that “positively justify their existence” and begin to experience chance with disgust. For her (p. 31), “there is no more odious way to punish a man than to constrain him to acts whose meaning is denied to him”, therefore, the goals of individuals must always be starting points for new overcomings, in a movement called “creative freedom”:

The creator relies on previous creations to create the possibility of new creations; their present project embraces the past and places a confidence in the freedom to come that will never be denied. At each moment, they reveal the being with a view to a further unveiling; At every moment, their freedom is confirmed throughout the entire creation. However, man does not create the world; he can only reveal it through the resistance that this world presents to him; the will is only defined by raising obstacles; and through the contingency of facticity, some obstacles can be overcome, others cannot (Beauvoir, 2005, p. 28-29).

Freire (2019), based on the recognition that individuals and the world are unfinished, reveals the need for the permanent movement of human awareness of their incompleteness, which mobilizes the search for being in the projection of the future through being, as Beauvoir (2005) points out. However, the author (p. 103) emphasizes that, despite the starting point of this movement being in individuals, there are no individuals without the world, without reality, therefore, this “movement starts from human-world relations” established in the present time, in the here and now of life, made up of situations in which individuals find themselves “sometimes immersed, sometimes emerged, sometimes inserted”. For Freire (2019, p. 103), individuals can only move to better build the future after realizing their situation in the world “and, to do so, authentically, it is even necessary that the situation they are in does not appear to them as something fatal and insurmountable, but as a challenging situation, which only limits them.”

Based on this human-world relationship, in which both are jointly reflections of each other, Velho (2004, p. 29) emphasizes that the individual project is not a purely internal, subjective event, it develops and is “elaborated within of a *field of possibilities*, historically

and culturally circumscribed, both in terms of the very notion of the individual and existing themes, priorities and cultural paradigms”.

Therefore, the *field of possibilities* category is fundamental to understanding the notion of project, specifically life project, since each and every project will always be prepared within structural and conjunctural conditions. However, like Velho (2004, p. 28), we believe that there is no such thing as a purely individual project, without social or third-party parameters, as they are created as a result of “sociocultural experiences, a code of interpreted experiences and interactions” (Velho, 2004, p. 28). But, just like Beauvoir (2005, p. 34) and Freire (2019), we understand that it is necessary for individuals to accept themselves as unfinished, “being that needs to be”, so that, in being, they produce freedom.

As Sousa & Alves (2019) report, the concept of a life project is under construction, having recently become popular due to the increase in life expectancy and the advancement of technology, which have enabled individuals, in a certain way, to outline their futures. For us, life project is, first of all, a noun that names an idea of action loaded with values and socio-historical constructions that need to be considered when we use life project as a verb, that is, when we intend to do occupational-therapeutic social work, produce stocks. Therefore, we are linked to an occupational therapy that, since the 1970s, has been working on the process of bringing together the social field, citizenship and social rights, outlining a field of action for occupational therapists, especially with young people popular schools and public schools, but not only. The concepts presented here support the construction of the analysis that will be carried forward.

Methodological Path

This section of the broader study, already mentioned, brings a mapping review that aims to understand the movement of research activity in a given area, being used to map and categorize the literature on a particular subject, also enabling the recognition of gaps in existing research (Pereira et al., 2021). Through the mapping review, it is possible to describe a research field (Grant & Booth, 2009).

Therefore, the academic mapping of the field was carried out in Brazilian journals, using the terms “occupational therapy” and “life project” or “life projects” or “future project” or “future projects”, taking The SciELO – Scientific Electronic Library Online library was used as the basis for this survey, open until January 2024, bringing together 15 works. The descriptors used sought to cover the diversity of terms present in national literature, to talk about “life project” (Gobbo, 2016; Sousa & Alves, 2019).

As it specifically addresses occupational therapy, we also chose to search for texts published in the main Brazilian journals in the area: *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, *Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo* and *Revista Interinstitucional Brasileira de Terapia Ocupacional*, using the same search terms already mentioned, bringing together 27 texts.

In total, 42 texts were found, three of which were duplicates, leaving 39 works. All were read in full to identify what theoretical and/or practical articulation existed between the theme in question and occupational therapy. As a result, 14 were discarded because they mentioned the terms only in the abstract or in a non-specific way in the body of the text, leaving a total of 25 works, dated from 2003 to 2023.

Furthermore, a search was carried out in the Biblioteca Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações (BDTD), using the terms “occupational therapy” and “life project(s)” or “future project(s)” in the title, summary or keywords, in an open period. The variation of plural terms did not imply changes in results. 14 works were found, seven of which were dissertations and seven theses, however, one thesis was discarded because it emphasized the project for the future of occupational therapy as a profession, leaving a total of 13 works. The first text published on the topic, within the scope of theses and dissertations, was in 2002, and the last, in 2023.

After a detailed reading of all the material found, it was organized into three thematic axes: “life project as a resource/activity and objective in the practical work of the occupational therapist”, “life project as a category of analysis and discussion by/by occupational therapists” and “life project as a theoretical and methodological construction in/in occupational therapy”, as we present below.

Results and Discussion

Axis 1: Life project as a resource/activity and objective in the practical work of the occupational therapist

The first thematic axis groups the largest number of texts, 16 publications in journals, four theses and three dissertations, in a total of 23 works, as shown in Table 1, below. These report the use of life projects as a resource/activity in the practical work of the occupational therapist and the role of this professional in helping the (re)construction of life projects.

Table 1 . References of Thematic Axis 1, in chronological order of publication.

Title	Author(s)	Periodical/Program	Type	Year
Reabilitação com ênfase no território: Jardim D’Abril e Jardim Boa Vista, no município de São Paulo	Oliver, F. C.; Aoki, M.; Tissi, M. C. & Nicolau, S. M.	Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo	Experience report	2003
Terapia ocupacional e o cuidado integral à saúde de crianças e adolescentes: a construção do ACCALANTO	Galheigo, S. M. & Angelli, A. A. C.	Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo	Original article	2008
O dispositivo grupal como intervenção em reabilitação: reflexões a partir da prática em Terapia Ocupacional	Sâmea, M.	Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo	Original article	2008
Ação e criação na interface das artes e da saúde	Lima, E. M. F.; Inforsato, E. A.; Lima, L. J. C. & Castro, E. D..	Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo	Original article	2009
PACTO Adolescentes: arte e corpo na invenção de dispositivos de terapia ocupacional para a produção de vida e saúde na adolescência	Lima, E. M. F. A.; Canguçu, D. F.; Moraes, C. & Inforsato, E. A.	Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo	Original article	2009
O processo de revisão de vida em grupo como recurso terapêutico para idosos em Terapia Ocupacional	Perez, M. P. & Almeida, M. H. M.	Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo	Original article	2010
Percurso juvenis e Trajetórias escolares: vidas que se tecem nas periferias das cidades	Silva, C. R.	Pós-Graduação em Educação da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Thesis	2011
Oficina de culinária como estratégia de intervenção da Terapia Ocupacional com adolescentes em situação de vulnerabilidade social	Pereira, D. C.; Silva, E. K. A., Ito, C. Y.; Bell, B. B.; Ribeiro, C. M. G., & Zanni, K. P.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Experience report	2014

Table 1 . Continued...

Title	Author(s)	Periodical/Program	Type	Year
Mapeamento da atuação do terapeuta ocupacional nos Centros de Atenção Psicossocial Álcool e Drogas (CASPS ad) do interior do estado de São Paulo	Silva, C. R., Santos, C. N., Nogueira, J. N. S. & Malfitano, A. P. S.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Original article	2015
Circuitos e práticas religiosas nas trajetórias de vida de adultos em situação de rua na cidade de São Paulo	Galvani, D.	Instituto de Psicologia da Universidade de São Paulo	Thesis	2015
Oficinas socioculturais com crianças e jovens sob a perspectiva da Terapia Ocupacional Social	Bardi, G., Monzeli, G. A., Macedo, M. D. C., Neves, A. T. de L., & Lopes, J. S. R.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Experience report	2016
Vida cultural, econômica e cotidiana de mulheres americanas em São Paulo: contribuições para a terapia ocupacional	Sato, M. T.	Programa de Pós-Graduação em Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Dissertation	2017
A atuação da terapia ocupacional na atenção básica à saúde: uma revisão de literatura	Cabral, L. R. & Bregalda, M. M.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Review article	2017
Procesos y experiencias en las prácticas de terapia ocupacional en comunidad en argentina	Vinzón, V.	Programa de Pós-graduação em Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Dissertation	2018
Caracterização da prática dos terapeutas ocupacionais em cuidados paliativos nos serviços públicos oncológicos de saúde no Brasil	Perilla, V. M.L.	Programa de Pós-Graduação em Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Dissertation	2019
População em situação de rua e o mundo do trabalho: (im)possibilidades de transposição da linha abissal?	Pinho, R. J. do	Programa de Pós-Graduação em Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Thesis	2020
Reflexiones desde las Terapias Ocupacionales desde el Sur: violencia estructural, derechos humanos y género en procesos de acompañamiento de mujeres durante el embarazo y maternaje	Díaz, M., Palomino, T., Quintana, N., Palacios, M., & Aracena, P.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Experience report	2021
Oficinas de atividades, dinâmicas e projetos em Terapia Ocupacional Social como estratégia para a promoção de espaços públicos	Silva, M. G. da & Malfitano, A. P. S.	Interface	Experience report	2021
Abordagem grupal em terapia ocupacional com adultos e idosos no contexto da hospitalização	Souza, J. B. de., Almeida, M. H. M. de., Batista, M. P. P., & Toldrá, R. C.	Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo	Original article	2022
“Jardins das ocupações”: estratégias de cuidados diante de perdas ocupacionais e luto	Nascimento, C. A. V. do; Souza, de A. M. & Corrêa, V. A. C.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Reflection article	2022
“O que se faz, como se faz, por que se faz?” – Focalizando o núcleo da Terapia Ocupacional no campo da saúde mental infantojuvenil	Táparo, F.A.	Programa de Pós-Graduação em Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Thesis	2023
Encontro de mulheres poderosas: estratégia de intervenção em terapia ocupacional social com cuidadoras informais de pessoas com deficiência intelectual	Gomes, C. M. S., Schiavo, K. V., Nascimento, A. P. C. & Macedo, M. D. C. de	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Original article	2023
Atuação de terapeutas ocupacionais na Rede de Atenção Psicossocial em um estado do nordeste brasileiro	Mata, C. C.; Bregalda, M. M.; Freitas, R. O. S. do N. & Veloso, C. F.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Original article	2023

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on the results of Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional, Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo, SciELO and Biblioteca Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações

In this thematic axis, the texts occasionally mention “life project” to talk about a practical action or announce the capacity of the occupational therapist to intervene in the construction, resizing and strengthening of the life projects of the subjects to whom he directs his action in different contexts and subareas of occupational therapy. As exceptions, Bardi et al. (2016) and Gomes et al. (2023) give some meaning to the role of the occupational therapist in the (re)construction of life projects by linking life

projects to the cultural identity of people and groups, the expansion of social support networks, the enhancement of social participation and the exercise of citizenship.

The same occurred in theses and dissertations, such as Silva (2011), Galvani (2015) and Sato (2018), who develop their studies based on the theoretical-methodological framework of social occupational therapy and use the expression life project, revealing the expectations of this subarea to contribute to the construction of subsidies for the formulation of life projects, in relation to those with which it works. Silva (2011) demarcates the use of *Oficinas de Atividades, Dinâmicas e Projetos*³ in the work of social occupational therapists with young people to build life plans and projects, while Sato (2018) brings the authors Barros et al. (2002) to talk about activities in social occupational therapy and their potential for reflection on life projects. In this sense, Sato (2018) takes up the words of Barros (2004) to say that:

The action processes in social occupational therapy become social spaces of cultural and relational negotiation, of production or facilitation of the person's participation in collective life, in the elaboration of life projects and in the feeling of belonging and cannot be understood through of separations and disjunctions (Barros, 2004, p. 92).

Sato (2018) concludes his work by stating that actions in social occupational therapy enable the creation of practices that are sensitive to constant cultural and social changes and enable the rewriting of life projects, strengthening and building new meanings for life.

Vinzón (2018), despite seeking to understand the implications of occupational therapists' actions in the daily lives and life projects of the people for whom they direct their action, did not attribute a definition to the life project construct, but considers the existence of an occupational-therapeutic practice activity around life projection. Perilla (2018) characterized in the results of his study a practice developed by occupational therapists in oncology services in Brazil called "resignification of life", in which one of the objectives is the reorganization of life projects.

Pinho (2020) talks about the actions of occupational therapy in projecting the lives of homeless people in the context of work, correlating the productive inclusion of these people with the resumption of their life projects and, to this end, highlights the technical action of therapists occupational skills in the development of long-term life projects, giving direction to their life project conception, but without referencing their idea, as we see in the excerpt:

We believe that technical actions in occupational therapy carry with them an ethical commitment to social emancipation and a potential to become so, to the extent that they are constructed in a horizontal way, that they are shared and co-responsible with the subjects for whom they are intended, that articulate multiple and plural knowledge, so that the technician's references and knowledge do not serve the colonization and imposition of hegemonic ways of life and actions, but that, in a counter-hegemonic way, produce visibility and existence of desires, to the needs and meanings of the subjects, through purposeful actions and actions, committed to their life projects and creating possible conditions for their implementation (Pinho, 2020, p.254).

³ Silva mentions Lopes et al. (2011).

The author uses Lussi & Morato (2016) as references to discuss ways in which occupational therapy promotes and sustains life projects within the scope of work, such as the solidarity economy.

In order to affirm the technical capacity of the occupational therapist in helping to project life, Táparo (2023, p. 99) presented results that would confirm the role of the occupational therapist in “construction of life projects, expansion of possibilities for social participation, engagement and autonomy” in child and adolescent mental health and presented authors from occupational therapy, from the field of mental health as a whole, who endorse this affirmation are: Mângia & Nicácio (2001).

In this axis, although the texts do not present a theoretical framework that explains the action and/or function of subjects designing their lives, we understand that there is a consensus among the authors that occupational therapists have knowledge and technical capacity for interventions that foster life projects.

Axis 2: Life project as a category of analysis and/or research discussion of research by/by occupational therapists

The second thematic axis brings together five texts, four publications in journals and one thesis, presented in Table 2. They mention the life project generally as a category of analysis and/or discussion of research, but do not explain a concept or describe a specific action of the occupational therapist within the scope of life projection.

Table 2. References of Thematic Axis 2, in chronological order of publication.

Title	Author(s)	Periodical/Program	Type	Year
Pessoas com deficiência: entre necessidades e atenção à saúde	Souza, F. dos R. & Pimentel, A. M.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Original article	2012
Percepções sobre trabalho: análise de concepções de pessoas em situação de rua	Lussi, I. A. de O.; Ricci, T. E., & Pinho, R. J. do	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Original article	2017
Entre rupturas e permanências: modos de vida e estratégias de enfrentamento à vida nas margens no cotidiano de pessoas trans	Melo, K. M. M. de	Programa de Pós-Graduação em Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Thesis	2021
Relato de experiência com um programa de preparação para a aposentadoria de servidores públicos	Caro, C. C.; Arakawa, V. A. T. & Andrade, V. B. E.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Experience report	2021
Abordagem da temática do trabalho em um serviço de saúde mental: reflexões e apontamentos a partir de um estágio em terapia ocupacional	Melo, A. M. R. de & Bregalda, M. M.	Revista Interinstitucional Brasileira de Terapia Ocupacional	Experience report	2022

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional, Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo and Revista Interinstitucional Brasileira de Terapia Ocupacional

In the research developed by Melo (2021), the author mentions the expression “life project” numerous times, mainly to demarcate categories of discussion and analysis of the life stories of the participants in the study. But, despite the author's interest in understanding how life projects are woven into the daily lives of trans people, she does not present a reference that supports the function/need of life projection.

However, the author (Melo, 2021, p. 159) develops the idea that “the construction of life projects involves experimenting with oneself in the context of a certain field of possibilities, and the perception of this field by those who experience it”. She uses Leão et al. (2011) to talk about inequalities in the possibilities of future projects and announces that social markers of difference influence the construction of life projects, as described:

The systems and social actors point to the fact that the impositions, sometimes invisible, of the sex-gender-desire system (in relation to other systems of social markers of difference) affect the lives of subjects from the first stages of the courses of life, outlining behaviors, life projects, spaces accessed, among others, based on gender technologies (Melo, 2021, p. 196).

This theoretical construction carried out by Melo (2021) brings elements for the reflection and action of occupational therapists within the scope of projecting the lives of the subjects to whom their practice is directed. The other texts in this axis did not bring elements to deepen the life project theme.

Axis 3: Life project as a theoretical and methodological construction in occupational therapy

The last thematic axis is composed of five publications in journals, four dissertations and one theses, as described in Table 3. The authors of these works focused on a theoretical and methodological construction on life project, seeking support for the practical dialogue of occupational therapy within the scope of life projection.

Table 3. References of Thematic Axis 3, in chronological order of publication.

Title	Author(s)	Periodical/Program	Type	Year
Terapia Ocupacional e grupos: em busca de espaços de subjetivação	Sâmea, M.	Instituto de Psicologia da Universidade de São Paulo	Dissertation	2002
A terapia ocupacional no campo da gerontologia: uma contribuição para revisão de projetos de vida	Tiveron, R.M.	Programa de Estudos Pós-Graduados em Gerontologia da Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo	Dissertation	2008
Oficinas de atividades como processos educativos e instrumento para o fortalecimento de jovens em situação de vulnerabilidade social	Trajber, N. K. de A.	Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Dissertation	2010
Fatores protetivos à reincidência ao ato infracional – concepções de adolescentes em privação de liberdade	Silva, D. C. de O.; Pereira, A. R. & Pereira, P. E.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Original article	2013
O alcance da terapia ocupacional no desenvolvimento local	Correia, R. L.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Original article	2018
Jovens rurais de São Carlos - SP: circulação cotidiana, projetos de vida e os sentidos da escola	Farias, M. N.	Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Thesis	2021
Memória de bairro como projeto de vida coletiva a partir da abordagem de terapia ocupacional de ensinagem em desenvolvimento local participativo	Correia, R. L.	Revista Interinstitucional Brasileira de Terapia Ocupacional	Cover image	2022
Projetar a vida sendo menina: contribuições da terapia ocupacional social	Oliveira, M. T. & Pan, L. C.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Original article	2023
Projetar a vida sendo menina: contribuições da terapia ocupacional social	Oliveira, M. T. de	Programa de Pós-Graduação em Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Dissertation	2023
Mudanças para a permanência: a marca dadualidade pedagógica em diferentes projetos para o ensino médio no Brasil	Reis, S. C. C. A. G., & Lopes, R. E.	Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional	Original article	2023

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional, Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo and Revista Interinstitucional Brasileira de Terapia Ocupacional

In periodical texts, life project definitions are less in-depth than in theses and dissertations, however, they demonstrate the authors' intentionality in transmitting their ideas. In the case of Silva et al. (2013), in addition to using the life project as a thematic category of the research that sought to understand the conceptions of

adolescents deprived of liberty regarding the socio-educational measure of hospitalization and the protective factors against repeat offenses, the authors cite José Ricardo Ayres to say that “project” is the desire in movement to build history. Overall, Silva et al. (2013, p. 560) highlight the importance of the “socio-educational measure of hospitalization being related to the protective factors against repeat offenses and the elaboration of a life project”, pointing out that the definition of a life project can help in coping of life's adversities, but they do not correlate the definition of this project with the practice of occupational therapy with young people complying with socio-educational measures.

Two Axis 3 publications are authored by Correia (2018; 2022) and both address the idea of a collective life project. In the article, Correia (2018, p. 458) defines a collective life project as “collective desires, translated into objectives and activities that will engage local agents in the practice of confronting local life issues”, already in the publication alluding to the cover image (Correia, 2022, p. 668), the definition was “engendering processes, narratives, perceptions, memories, objects and responsibilities”. In both texts, the author articulates collective life projects with what he calls an occupational therapy approach to teaching participatory local development. According to the author, this approach brings together “a set of procedures that supports and guides the intervention reasoning of occupational therapists with local agents in a territory and supports them in transforming negative aspects of the territory into positive ones, through their engagement in collective life health projects (Correia, 2022, p. 668). Correia (2018; 2022) references his definitions of a collective life project with a text from 2016, which he co-authored with Camila Santiago da Rocha⁴.

In the same way as Correia (2018; 2022), Reis & Lopes (2023) discuss life projection, but do not present authors to support their statements. The authors define a life project and a future project as something that is not stable and definitive, pluralized, multifaceted and complex, “a type of constant and lasting objective that helps young people in the search for meaning in life and encourages them to make a difference in the world” (Reis & Lopes, 2023, p. 16).

Among the theses and dissertations, the first text that provides a theoretical and methodological foundation on the theme “life project” is that of Sâmea (2002). This author developed work on groups in occupational therapy within the scope of mental health, with an emphasis on the articulation between subjectivity and the social place of the subjects to whom group therapeutic-occupational action is aimed. Sâmea (2002, p. 68) has as a reference the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Enrique Pichon Rivière, for whom “planning the future would mean elaborating in the here and now the experience of death that is felt when a new objective has already been grasped; finitude is what gives possibility to the project, due to the fact that feeling that something ends implies perceiving that something begins”. In this way, Sâmea (2002) developed an occupational therapy group which, according to her, constituted a space for projecting

⁴This text was published in *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, a periodical integrated into our mapping. However, the work did not appear in the searches, nor does it appear on the periodical's website, when we carried out isolated searches or in the indicated volume. The text, however, is available on the worldwide web and our reference to it was due to its Citation the author's texts that described the search carried out: Correia e Rocha (2016).

the future, as it enabled the search for new horizons, alternatives and individual perspectives.

The next text that deepened his definition of a life project was written by Tiveron (2008), who carried out a study linked to the area of gerontology, in which he proposed to investigate how occupational therapy can contribute to life projects in the post-retirement period. The author linked the creation or rescue of life projects to subjective choice, the field of possibilities, the dynamism of projects and the need for them to be communicated, using the Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Velho for this purpose.

Tiveron (2008, p. 110) concluded his study by stating that “the Occupational Therapy professional has an arsenal and technical training that allows him to listen, understand, diagnose and act as an interlocutor of the real needs of this subject”. Parallel to this, she highlighted that this professional “can present a field of experimentation that allows the acquisition of new knowledge and learning to outline new life projects”.

In addition to incorporating a theoretical framework from anthropology to define life projects, Tiveron (2008) recognizes the potential of experimenting with human activities for the (re)construction of life projects. This experimentation is mediated by the occupational therapist who, during his action, presents alternatives and offers support so that life possibilities become concrete. Farias & Lopes (2020, p. 1351) highlight this perspective in the *Activity, Dynamics and Project Workshops* developed by social occupational therapy. According to the authors, these social technologies are spaces for “experimentation, subjective constitution, meeting, doing together” and “provide a moment of *what to do – action and reflection*, which turn to the lives of the subjects, to think about their performance” in the world, in the sense of revealing and pronouncing it. Therefore, it is praxis, a product of the radical interaction between action and reflection (Freire, 2019), and, according to Farias & Lopes (2020), it is a praxis for freedom.

Based on the framework of social occupational therapy, Trajber (2010) carried out a study with young people in situations of social vulnerability, seeking to analyze how the *Activity Workshops*, undertaken by the METUIA/UFSCar team, worked in the construction and reconstruction of meanings of social relationships and individual and collective life projects. The author reported that the construction of life projects has strong social and group components, which she called “social possibilities” and reveal the level of consciousness of their authors, however, she did not attribute this theoretical construction to any author. On the other hand, he highlighted the French sociologist Robert Castel to problematize the idea of work as a strong mechanism for insertion into society, in productive and existential terms, and its absence as a limiter of life projects, both individual and collective. Also, Paulo Freire was brought to discuss the meanings of *being in the world*, linking this concept to the projection of life, however, he did not deepen the discussion.

Furthermore, Trajber (2010) relied on authors who reference social occupational therapy, such as Lopes & Silva (2007), to talk about inequalities in the construction of life projects for young Brazilians, and Lopes et al. (2006), to say about the contribution of using *Activity Workshops* in the joint construction, professional and subject, of life plans and projects. The author concluded that being in the world of the young people researched “is limited to the here and now, with there not yet being a process of reflection that involves existential questions, from which life projects largely derive”.

that is, recognizes the awareness of human existence as a condition for projecting the future, but does not reference this idea or problematize it.

Farias (2021) also drew on social occupational therapy to understand the daily circulation and life projects of rural young people in the city of São Carlos-SP, as well as the meanings they give to school and the brand of this institution in their life projects. To define a life project (p.165), Dayrell (2012) is used, pointing out that he understands a life project as “the action of choosing the paths of life, which are changeable and dynamic and depend directly on the field of possibility, that is, the social, economic, political, cultural, historical and situational conditions that permeate the lives of young people”. Still citing Dayrell (2012), he emphasized two essential issues attributed by the author for the construction of life projects: *identity*, which would be self-awareness, and *knowledge of reality*, related to the social structure in which people are inserted. In this direction, we also rely on Gilberto Velho to talk about the field of possibilities for projecting life and on Maria Zenaide Alves, who discusses biographical narratives that involve the past, present and future in the definitions of life projects.

Taking the results of his research, Farias (2021) created two categories of life projects: *necessity projects*, which involve the search for more urgent solutions given living conditions, such as finding a job; and *dream projects*, which are related to the more distant future, such as access to material, social and cultural goods.

Based on the same framework, Oliveira (2023) developed a study that sought to understand how young students design their lives. The author referenced Juarez Dayrell co-authored with Leão et al. (2011), to say that life projects are individual actions of choosing possible futures, a transformation of desire into objectives that guide the direction of life. She also brings Gilberto Velho to demarcate the field of possibilities and the theoretical-methodological framework of social occupational therapy to emphasize the centrality of the school in the construction of life projects and the social technologies of this subarea for the process of raising awareness among young people about themselves and the world, with a view to building more autonomous life projects.

Furthermore, Oliveira (2023) pointed out in his text the implications of social markers of difference in the structuring of life projects, as well as the idea of *need-projects* and *dream-projects*, elaborated by Farias (2021).

Finally, in this axis, another co-authored production by this author (Oliveira & Pan, 2023), a research article originating from the master's thesis presented previously. In this article, the authors do not delve into the concept of life project as much as in the master's thesis, but they point out that the study comprises life projects based on the field of sociology.

Conclusion

Although occupational therapists have been producing experiences and research since 2002, correlating the action of this professional with the promotion of the life projects of the subjects to whom they focus in their action, there are few publications that focus on any theoretical and methodological meaning around of the projection of life. In this mapping, two subareas stand out with the most productions, social occupational therapy and occupational therapy in mental health, with some dialogue also with the field of work.

Each subarea uses its own occupational therapist authors to justify the practical use of the life project resource and the ways in which the subarea fosters life projection. However, we also identified a tendency in the repetition of authors from areas related to occupational therapy who address the theme of life project, mainly related to the fields of anthropology, sociology and education, with a predominance of the Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Cardoso Alves Velho, brought by both authors who report a link and/or identification with the social occupational therapy subarea as well as with occupational therapy in mental health; in addition to the social scientist and educator Juarez Tarcísio Dayrell, emphasized exclusively by authors from the social occupational therapy subarea. When these researchers are not explicitly cited, we see their concepts bordering on the theoretical constructions undertaken by occupational therapists.

With this, we conclude that life projection is an important theme in occupational therapy as a whole, and that, based on our survey, this professional would be willing to undertake actions that envision experimentation, in which encounters and discoveries occur that outline and/or reconfigure existence. Therefore, the meaning of projecting the future must focus on the action-reflection of themes that consider the real living conditions of people and groups, linked to the micro and macrosocial reality, contributing to subjective knowledge and the world, in the present time, and to the expansion of possibilities of *being and becoming*, towards social and personal emancipation. Finally, taking the occupational therapist as a social articulator and agent of educational action, in its ethical-political and technical dimension (Farias & Lopes, 2020), we highlight the social technologies of social occupational therapy to dialogue, inquire and encourage, together with individuals and collectives, an approach around projects and possible and broad futures.

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