Original Article

Integrating intersectionality into occupation-based research: Reflections on methodological challenges and potential

Integrando interseccionalidade em pesquisas baseadas na ocupação: Reflexões sobre desafios e potenciais metodológicos

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Abstract

Since its inception in the 1970s, intersectionality has been taken up across various disciplines, drawn on as a theory, framework, guiding lens, critical tool and beyond. Despite origins in Black feminism and original applications aimed at articulating the process of marginalization of Black women, intersectionality has since been acknowledged for its utility in diverse contexts. However, within occupational science and occupational therapy academic contexts specifically, intersectionality remains largely discussed in a theoretical sense with insufficient critical application of an intersectional research approach that situates diverse social markers of difference and occupations within systems of power. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to closing this gap, highlighting the challenges and potential of intersectional occupation-based research. In addition to outlining four main postulations for applying (or 'actioning') intersectionality in occupation-based research generated by the authors through engagement with theoretical and research texts, examples illustrating their own attempts to integrate an intersectional approach into our research are shared. Critical reflexivity on these examples points to alignments with an intersectionality approach and the understandings these enabled, as well as challenges and limitations in our applications. The potential and future directions of intersectionality within occupation-based research and practice are then discussed.

Keywords: Thinking, Critical Theory, Occupational Therapy.

Resumo

Desde a sua criação na década de 1970, interseccionalidade tem sido adotada em várias disciplinas como teoria, referencial, lente orientadora, ferramenta crítica e muito mais. Apesar das origens no feminismo negro e das aplicações originárias estarem destinadas a articular os processos de marginalização das mulheres negras, a interseccionalidade tem sido, desde então, reconhecida pela sua utilidade em diversos contextos. Contudo, especificamente nos contextos acadêmicos da ciência ocupacional e da terapia ocupacional, a interseccionalidade permanece amplamente discutida num sentido teórico, carecendo de aplicações críticas em pesquisa, com uma abordagem interseccional que situe os diversos marcadores sociais da diferença e ocupações em articulação com os sistemas de poder. O objetivo deste artigo é contribuir para o equacionamento desta lacuna, destacando os desafios e o potencial da pesquisa interseccional baseada na ocupação. Além da proposição criada pela autoria de quatro principais postulados para aplicar (ou 'atuar') interseccionalidade em pesquisas baseadas na ocupação - dado o debruçar em textos teóricos e de pesquisa - também são compartilhados exemplos que ilustram a tentativa dos mesmos em integrar uma abordagem interseccional e suas pesquisas. A reflexividade crítica sobre estes exemplos aponta para alinhamentos com uma abordagem interseccional e os entendimentos que estes possibilitaram, bem como desafios e limites na nossa aplicação da teoria. Por fim, são discutidas as direções potenciais e futuras da interseccionalidade nas pesquisas e práticas baseadas na ocupação.

Palavras-chave: Pensamento Crítico, Teoria Crítica, Terapia Ocupacional.

Intersectionality and Research

Since the 1970s, analyses considering race, class, gender, and sexual orientation have been conducted in Brazil where the debate regarding intersectionality or association of identity categories has mainly unfolded in Anthropology, enabling constructionist and anti-essentialist understandings about the articulation of social markers of difference[1] (Hirano, 2019). Considering the context of the United States of America (US), the concept of intersectionality was coined in the 1980s by Black feminist scholar and jurist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1993). Articulating her ideas with the postulates of other Black scholars, Crenshaw was concerned with how feminist and anti-racist movements were not able to adequately ascertain and address the needs of Black women. Analyzing the US court system, Crenshaw realized that intersecting forms of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and other social markers of difference were not considered, resulting in decisions based on fragmented understandings[2] that did not recognize how combined axes of oppression permeate the lives of marginalized groups (Hirano, 2019).

Building from Crenshaw's foundation, intersectionality has been globally conceptualized as a theory, critical methodology (Davis, 2014), framework (Kriger et al., 2022), lens (Santos & Toomey, 2018; Ryan & Briggs, 2019), approach (Hancock, 2019; Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015), model (Beck et al, 2001; Ramsay, 2014, Nixon, 2019), critical thinking tool (Mattsson, 2014; Dill & Zambrana, 2020), and epistemic and practical research analysis tool (Ambrosio & Silva, 2022). Regardless of the term assigned, applying an intersectional

approach holds the potential to de- and re-construct existing discourses shaping understandings of how people experience and attempt to address oppression and privilege. Further, it has been shown to be conceptually applicable and adaptable to a wide range of fields, disciplines and contexts. Yet, Abrams et al. (2020, p. 1) have argued that there remains "a need for additional guidance and support for utilizing and applying intersectionality theory throughout the qualitative research process."

This challenge of translating intersectionality theory into methodological[3] application has been addressed by scholars from a variety of disciplines, including for example population health, education, sociology, knowledge translation, and cultural studies (Abrams et al., 2020; Bauer, 2014; Misra et al., 2021; Kelly et al., 2021; Rice et al., 2019), providing relevant recommendations for addressing this challenge in the study of occupation. While some authors have also considered ways that intersectionality can inform experimental-type (i.e., quantitative) designs (Bailey et al., 2019; Bauer, 2014), our paper focuses on forms of naturalistic inquiry.

Many of these more recent articles extend on earlier work by McCall (2005), highlighting that this challenge has persisted for more than two decades (Bailey et al., 2019; van Witteloostuijn, 2018). As a critical social theory developed by Black feminist scholars, different disciplines seeking to use intersectionality to inform methodological design must adapt the seminal work to fit the focus of a specific empirical study (Bailey et al., 2019). Thus, in this section we summarize some of the literature addressing ways to 'do' intersectionality in research (e.g., DeBlaere et al., 2018).

Authors who have addressed how to theoretically-inform their methodology using intersectionality have outlined key characteristics or tenets that should be incorporated, such as the importance of centering social justice and equity in the research (Abrams et al., 2020; Misra et al., 2021; Rice et al., 2019), and placing the communities of interest at the centre of the process such as through community-based and participatory research approaches (Bailey et al., 2019). Davis (2014, p. 17) stressed that applying these types of principles are essential to avoid simply using intersectionality as a "feminist buzzword", or contributing to what Abrams et al. (2020, p. 1) described as theory being "…named but not deeply engaged". Particularly useful are the three 'critical movements' in the literature on intersectionality identified by Rice et al. (2019, p. 413). The authors argued that intersectionality can help manage complexity and make change, can inform how we understand identities as either dynamic or static, and can help ensure justice in the research, making the point that "[…] intersectionality is *always* political".

Several articles aim to provide guidance in enacting or applying intersectionality theory methodologically by sharing strategies to either adopt and/or to avoid at all stages of methodological design, from initial study conceptualization, through to data analysis and dissemination (e.g., Abrams et al., 2020; van Witteloostuijn, 2018). In this literature, some have shared and reflected on their own attempts to apply intersectionality within research examples (e.g., Windsong, 2018; Kelly et al., 2021). For example, focusing on qualitative health research Abrams et al. (2020) shared specific examples of ways that this theory can be incorporated at different stages of the research process depending on the study, such as thinking through how recruitment should occur or the phrasing of interview questions.

Similar to the quality criteria used to assess critical qualitative research more broadly, the importance of situating and positioning the researchers in relation to work is also emphasized (e.g., Ned et al., 2024; Abrams et al., 2020; Davis, 2014). Indeed, Labelle (2020) and Misra et al. (2021) stressed the need to reflect on how researchers' own epistemologies should shape their decisions when engaging intersectionality methodologically. Haynes et al. (2020) focus specifically on 'intersectionality methodology,' which they differentiate from intersectionality as method, and identify four features in their synthesis of literature focused on Black women's experiences in higher education. These features included keeping Black women as the central subjects of the inquiry, using a critical lens to identify power relations at different levels, addressing the influence of power on the research process, and highlighting Black women's complex social markers of difference.

As there is no standard approach for applying intersectionality theory methodologically (Rice et al., 2019; Misra et al., 2021), there is instead a need for guiding principles or postulations for decision making. It has also been argued that the application of such postulations should align with methods that match disciplinary aims (i.e., if policy-focused, then methods should be policy-oriented) (Bailey et al., 2019). Thus, we propose that it makes sense to consider both grounding postulations and the use of 'occupation-centered' methods to deepen understanding of how occupations shape and are shaped by people's position at the intersections of varied systems of power.

While Smith et al. (2025) acknowledged the paucity of articles on intersectionality within occupational therapy literature as a limitation of their scoping review, over the past decade in particular, intersectionality has been increasingly cited by occupational science and occupational therapy scholars (Reid et al., 2025a). Though this trend continues, the extent to which intersectionality is drawn on and thoroughly integrated into the work, particularly within research methodologies, remains a point of critique. While the term intersectionality itself is used in paper abstracts and at times in the content of the papers, there are few examples of how exactly the occupation-focused research took an intersectional approach in the methodology - at least with respect to the consideration of systems, social positioning *and* the systemic processes that oppress and privilege peoples' access to and engagement in occupations. More commonly, intersectionality is included as a keyword or is mentioned without description of *how* the work applied an intersectional approach (Reid et al., 2025a).

Within this article, drawing upon what is known about applying intersectionality to methodology, we aim to identify potential approaches to integrating intersectionality into occupation-based research. We first describe our author team's positionality/ies, followed by a description of four key postulations for enacting intersectionality as a methodological framework when undertaking occupation-based research. Thirdly, we describe our experiences of attempting to do so in occupation-focused research, drawing in examples that reflect both strengths and gaps. We then describe what intersectionality is *not* and common missteps when claiming an intersectional approach, providing cautionary notes related to its enactment. After explicating our research examples and describing our attempts to enact intersectionality methodologically, we critically reflect on challenges, limits and the variable extent to which our work addressed the four key postulations. Finally, we discuss implications for occupation-focused research moving forward.

Author Positionalities

We share reflections on our positionalities as four authors committed to our own transformative perspectives and practices, prior to sharing specific examples from our respective research. At the same time, we acknowledge that positionality statements, while meant to identify limits of knowledge production and how particular background experiences inform human subjectivity (Savolainen et al., 2023), can reinforce power dynamics and hegemonic knowledge structures (Gani & Khan, 2024). To resist perpetuating and recreating hierarchical positioning and separatism of identities, we attempt to situate our identifications, background experiences and the contexts of our work in relation to our on-going collaborations and our work and life contexts. We have been working together for multiple years as an authorship team, however we navigate our own unique experiences with respect to how we are positioned within our work and life contexts. Throughout our collaboration we have worked through challenges such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our research, political influences on immigration practices, the threats to the rights of 2S/LGBTQ+ populations, among others. In our writing together, we each bring our own unique positioning and background experiences and aim to integrate these to strengthen the key messages of our work, while engaging in on-going negotiation of power relations within our collaborations as embedded within academic structures. Further, we acknowledge and bring attention to the power dynamics within our authorship team, whereby two of the authors (3 and 4) functioned as more 'senior' scholars in a supervisory capacity. Meanwhile, authors 1 and 2 are early career researchers who are working with communities who have more similarities in identity/lived experience with them than authors 3 and 4 have with the communities in the work they describe. The coming together of the differences in our positionalities in relation to communities we work with relates to recognition that we bring different forms of expertise to the authorship team and worked to acknowledge this. In addition, in coming together to write this paper, the more 'junior' members had taken up intersectionality in ways that embedded it throughout their research, a strength which was valued in discussions and decisions regarding our roles within the paper.

The first author is a Métis PhD candidate and occupational therapist raised and educated in Western Canada on the stolen and unsurrendered lands of many diverse Coast Salish nations. Their community-based research explores the ways in which gender, sexually and romantically diverse Indigenous Peoples come to experience their ways of knowing, being and doing through occupation. Through a relationship-centered approach to their doctoral work, Holly weaves their positionality as a transgender and queer Indigenous person into broader understandings of occupation, and emphasizes how uplifting marginalized voices of those at the intersections of socially and politically charged structures of power can shift understandings towards a more nuanced, strengths-based and joyful future.

The second author is a gay cisgender Brazilian research associate (postdoc) and occupational therapist who came from a poor family and now is based and working in the United States of America. He was able to experience better living conditions and university education through different governmental programs focused on social development (e.g., quota, student permanence, and research scholarships). His work is focused on historically

marginalized populations, apprehending how social markers of difference, like social class, gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, among others are influenced by power relationships. These social markers of difference intersect and create/favor life possibilities/impossibilities in society and considering that, the author investigates possible contributions of occupational therapy and occupational science to support social justice of these groups.

The third author is a professor in an occupational therapy program in Canada and has been active in occupational science scholarship for over two decades. Her scholarship has focused on integrating critical social theory and qualitative methodologies to enhance awareness of the socio-political shaping of occupational inequities experienced by marginalized groups and to inform praxis aimed at diversifying occupational possibilities. This work is informed by her positionality as a White cisgender woman from a working-class background. Over the past few years, she has begun to engage with intersectionality theory given its potential to inform more complex analysis of how oppressive power relations shape differential occupational possibilities.

The fourth author is an associate professor in an occupational science and occupational therapy department in Canada. Her research mainly focuses on the experiences of French-speaking immigrants and refugees within Canadian Francophone minority communities and the role of Francophone spaces in shaping occupations that are available to this population. This work is informed by her positionality as a White cisgender woman who was born and raised in a somewhat homogeneous Francophone community that has more recently rapidly diversified demographically as a result of federal immigration policies and priorities. This shaped her interest in how community spaces need to be made more inclusive for folks who are not positioned in privileged ways within their host communities. Her work draws on intersectionality to better understand how systems of oppression, including heteronormativity, patriarchy, and white supremacy, among others, shape the experiences and occupational possibilities of voluntary and forced migrants.

Applying Intersectionality

Once an intersectional approach is decided upon to guide research, one of the most complex considerations when designing and conducting the study is what actions can be taken and *how* to take them. Rather than a static and prescriptive checklist, we suggest the following four postulations be drawn on when situating and integrating intersectionality. It is worth noting here that the term postulations is used within this work in reference to the basis of our argument for actioning intersectionality and we do not use it to suggest these arguments are based solely in the theoretical. Adapted from our previous work that involved engagement with theoretical texts and a review of the use of intersectionality theory in occupational science and therapy research (Reid et al., 2025a), the four principles for enacting intersectionality as a methodological framework include:

1) Countering the limits of a single-axis framework (Crenshaw, 1989, 1993);

2) Identifying marginalization outside prototypical identities (Carbado et al., 2013; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008);

3) Recognizing interrelations with systems (Collins & Bilge, 2020; Pewewardy, 2003);

4) Addressing social positions as dynamic and context dependent (Gopaldas, 2013; Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015).

The first consideration is of particular importance as a single-axis framework cannot attend fully to the complexity of interactions between identities, social markers of difference, systems of power and the systemic processes that influence occupational participation and opportunities. An intersectional approach challenges researchers to analyze occupational participation not based solely on a single aspect, but rather in relation to the many social markers of difference that interact with systems of power to shape the occupational experiences of groups and individuals. This anti-essentialist perspective can counter the tendency to reduce people to a single variable (e.g., gender), which undoubtedly decontextualizes and oversimplifies occupational experiences.

Secondly, intersectionality can be applied to examine how occupations are differentially facilitated and constrained due to the ways that intersectional invisibility shapes the experiences of those with non-prototypical marginalized identities (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Prototypical identities are mental representations of an ideal or stereotypical version of someone of a particular social group or identity. These stereotypical categories are often restricted to assumptions about race, gender and disability (Coles & Pasek, 2020). For instance, a prototypical disabled person may be assumed to also be white, cisgender, English-speaking, using a mobility aid, and so on. As such, intersectionality evokes a more nuanced recognition of non-prototypical identities by considering more expansive social markers of difference, such as mental health status, gender, marital status, income level, body size, employment status and type, disability status, sexuality, age, and education level to name a few (Gopaldas, 2013; Ned et al., 2024). The theory provides opportunities to consider how distinct processes of marginalization may be experienced by those who do not fit into this prototypical positioning that leave them further marginalized.

Thirdly, intersectionality fosters a recognition of how interrelations within and across identities, systems and systemic processes influence experiences of marginalization or privilege, rather than simply trying to quantify these factors. Simply put, essentializing identities into components and 'adding up' the number of different categories of marginalization one fits into is not an effective means of understanding the inextricable connectedness of peoples' social markers of difference and lived realities within various societal contexts. Rather than dissecting social markers of difference into separate categories and trying to understand each in a decontextualized way or proposing that various categories are equivalent in their dynamics or effects, intersectionality facilitates an intentional examination of not only which identities intersect with various systems of power, but *how* these intersections position someone and subsequently influence their experiences and opportunities.

Finally, while social markers of difference are dynamic and change across a lifetime, there is also an element of dynamism that positions people and groups as more or less marginalized, dependent on the structure of power being interacted with. In relation to occupation, the forms of oppression someone may face in one location (e.g., work), may differ from the privilege they may experience elsewhere (e.g., leisure). The extent to which people experience privilege or oppression is largely influenced by the interaction between their identities and the systems and spaces they are positioned within. Since many identities change and evolve over time, so do the contexts that various occupations are participated within, intersectionality becomes a useful lens for examining the complex ways oppression operates and just how dynamic and nuanced such processes

and experiences can be. Access to various occupations is inherently connected to intersections of social positioning (e.g., interrelations of various social markers of difference) and the systems of power that the occupations are taking place within.

Approaches and Challenges to Intersectional Occupation-Based Research

Outlined below are four examples of approaches we have taken to apply intersectionality in our work - at different depths - and addressing challenges we have experienced in doing so. Of note, these are not being presented as examples of how to mobilize intersectionality in occupation-based research nor to draw comparisons between the forms of privilege and oppression addressed, but rather are used to share critical reflections on potentialities, limits, and ways forward. The first two study examples reveal how intersectionality was integrated in the research from conceptualization through to implementation. The third and fourth examples highlight examples of when intersectionality was integrated later into the methodological process, mainly as an analytical tool to help explore the data in a more critical and nuanced way.

Holly Reid: The community of interest in my research, Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (2S/LGBTQ+) Indigenous Peoples, experience unique, intersectional forms of oppression that are heavily influenced by structures including heteronormativity, media, politics, white supremacy, colonization, and anti-Indigenous racism (Cooke & Shields, 2024). I came into my PhD program with the intention to utilize my privilege, access and opportunity to engage in research as a means of capacity building within 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous communities, and to do community-led and self-governed research that directly benefits the community.

Exploring the experiences, strengths and joys of this community is a means of resisting common discourses of struggle and challenge, while creating space for new ways of knowing, being and doing to be introduced and respected within occupational science. I began the process of building relationships with 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous Peoples in 2021 across two regions in British Columbia, Canada by connecting with two Indigenous-led organizations to discuss their interest in and capacity for engaging in research, knowing they already had Two-Spirit youth programming in place.

As the research relationships became established, 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous folks were invited to co-create the doctoral research priorities, design and implementation (Reid et al., 2025b). Enacting intersectionality throughout the process took many forms, including a year-long priority setting project where various occupations were used as a means of co-creating the study. These included discussion circles, painting, collage making, crafting, cooking, game nights, sharing meals, spending time outside, among other occupations the community identified as meaningful. Given that people come to situations with different life experiences, learning styles and familiarity with research, I aimed to enact intersectionality in the development phase of the research process by offering a diverse range of ways to participate and contribute.

In order to avoid short-term relationships that have a tendency to be extractive, disconnected and non-reciprocal, I moved from viewing intersectionality solely as part of the theoretical framework for the study, to a way of approaching the research from the outset. For instance, I drew on intersectionality when determining how to engage the community members through discussions about risks, challenges and potential

barriers to doing respectful research within a colonial institution. Taking this systems-level perspective ensured that rather than viewing the challenge or risk as inherent to the community (e.g., being Indigenous), we took a critical view that centered the unique ways that community identities were positioned within the research institution.

Funding was obtained in advance of engaging the community in the aforementioned activities to ensure reciprocity at all stages by providing honoraria, food, gifts and supplies for the occupations engaged in. An intersectional perspective on this process fostered the ability to critically reflect on ways that research is typically developed, the system-level factors that could facilitate or obtrude engagement from folks of certain social positions, and take actions to support positive research experiences for the community of interest.

The doctoral study that has come of this process is one that reveals stories of the complex and nuanced relationships between 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous identities and the diverse systems that participants are situated within. Rather than bringing with me a researcher-driven agenda, the community informed both the ethics application and study methods, which include individual interviews, participatory occupation sessions, art circles and sharing circles. This was different from what I anticipated, but community consultations made it clear how important forms of creative expression were for some.

We adjusted the methods accordingly and followed up with community members to ensure the study would be as inclusive as possible. The approach to data analysis and knowledge translation were responsive to intersectionality by taking into account the power inherent in institutional research and the expectations associated with mobilizing findings through publications and conferences. For example, study participants were invited to online sharing circles where they could contribute to the identification and naming of themes, and determine the content that is shared during knowledge translation activities along with how and where these activities take place.

This research has also brought capacity building opportunities to the organizational partners, such as a conference in 2024 where four of the research team members from the two organizational partners attended and co-presented our research with me. A manuscript describing the research development process was co-authored by the organizational partners who supported the priority setting project (Reid et al., 2025b). Further, a team member from each organization was invited to attend a writing and research retreat to further develop their research skills, which was funded through the same funder that supported our research development project.

The approach undertaken in this work relies heavily on the collaboration and relationship with the community of interest to inform what intersectional approaches fit within the context. This is the situated nature of intersectionality, much like the situated nature of occupation (Laliberte Rudman & Huot, 2012), and one that cannot be refined to a checklist or identity list. The meaning and impact of intersectional research is highly dependent on the people, environment and systems they are situated within.

Jaime Leite Jr: Situated within my research interests noted above, my approximation with an intersectional approach began in 2012 when I initiated my bachelor's degree in occupational therapy and I have since been using it as an analytical tool. My theoretical background is in social occupational therapy and its assumptions (Lopes & Malfitano, 2021). Through the years, I worked in partnership with colleagues with different backgrounds.

For example, through document analysis, we investigated the life possibilities of people who experience dissidence of gender and sexuality intersecting with Federal elections and threat to democracy (Braga et al., 2020). Moreover, through participatory research, we aimed to better understand the violence on streets, in schools and other public spaces intersecting race, gender, sexuality, class and other social markers of difference (Braga et al., 2022). Focusing on racial topics, through document analysis, the racial roots of occupational therapy in Brazil were investigated (Leite Junior et al., 2021), identifying the necessity of a political involvement of the profession and professionals regarding the topic of race (Farias et al., 2020), and also investing in occupational therapy training and education (Leite Junior & Lopes, 2017) from an intersectional perspective.

These experiences supported my research development and subsequent investigations I have contributed to and led. The possibility to use different methods that favored critical analysis, and using theoretical backgrounds that recognize the power dynamics present in society and profession strengthened how my studies aimed to investigate the intersection of social markers of difference in occupational therapy practice and research.

More deeply, during my PhD, through a survey, interviews, literature review, and content analysis, I investigated occupational therapy practice with the population who experience dissidence of gender and sexuality (Leite Junior & Lopes, 2022, 2025). Taking Butler's (2015) reflections regarding the creation of alliances between groups that aim for social justice (Fraser, 2002, 2006), I developed my theoretical-methodological bases articulating social occupational therapy, critical occupational science, and queer studies (Leite Junior et al., 2024).

Intersectional studies supported my analyses to understand historical aspects of the profession and its relation with the social issues, prestige, scientific validity, and power dynamics. For example, a lot of marginalized groups did not (and still do not) have access to higher education. There is also a gender disparity given the dominance of patriarchy, in which occupational therapy was historically understood as a 'feminine profession', because it is a care profession (Farias, 2021; Lima, 2021; Testa & Spampinato, 2010). This continues to shape the diversity of people who have the opportunity to access occupational therapy training, impacting the profession's development and understanding of its possibilities in terms of care and populations addressed.

During the interviews, practitioners were asked about positionality and intersectionality. Moreover, they were invited to reflect on whether their social markers of difference influence their practice and how users/clients interact with them. This was a challenging moment in data collection, because some of them were not familiar with the intersectional approach, so, there were some generic and evasive answers. Some practitioners did not do an explicit intersectional description of their work, but during the analytical process, it was possible to see them articulating their practices considering various social markers of difference and their interactions, making it possible that people experience subalternity or privileges. Although the intersectional approach was understood as a productive analytical resource, some limitations were also experienced due to the methods selected, being mainly applied during the analytical process, without the informants' partnership.

Debbie Laliberte Rudman: This example draws from an analysis conducted within the context of a larger collaborative ethnography addressing the discursive construction and negotiation of long-term unemployment in two North American cities (Aldrich et al., 2020; Laliberte Rudman et al., 2017)). Within this study, we examined how multiple types of

actors, including jobseekers, front line employment support service providers, and organizational and policy stakeholders understood and attempted to resolve unemployment. We drew upon critical social theory, particularly governmentality theory (Rose et al., 2006), and the concept of occupational possibilities to situate and critically unpack these understandings and actions in relation to broader neoliberal systems of governance, seeking to draw attention to how the occupational possibilities of persons experiencing long-term unemployment were constrained across a variety of life realms (Huot et al., 2020; Laliberte Rudman et al., 2017).

The application of intersectionality theory in this study was largely as a critical thinking tool, integrated at the stage of data analysis to go beyond a single-axis framework focused on age to critically unpack how intersecting social positions mattered for the negotiation of long-term unemployment and the production of precarious lives, particularly within the contexts of employment support services and work. Explicitly integrating intersectionality theory into the analysis of data specific to 'older' job seekers deepened our analysis of how age mattered in diverse ways as it intersected with other positionalities within contemporary oppressive power relations. This enabled analyses that drew attention to how being older intersected with other marginalized social positions, related to gender, work sector, social class, and being unemployed, in ways that differentially bounded possibilities of managing later life unemployment within neoliberal systems focused on locating problems and solutions as individual responsibilities (Laliberte Rudman & Aldrich, 2021). Moreover, it worked against a homogenous view of the 'older worker' by providing a means to unpack how systemic barriers tied to ageism intersected within other systems of oppression tied to social positions, such as sexism and classism, resulting in "inequities in 'choice' related to the quality and possibility of extended work" (Laliberte Rudman & Aldrich, 2021, p. 2) amongst those categorized as 'older workers', as well as a failure of employment support services to be enacted in ways informed by these intersections.

As one example, the analysis addressed how employer resistance to hiring older jobseekers was not only located in ageist beliefs and practices directed towards older workers regarding 'failing' bodies and minds, but taken-for-granted practices and policies embedded within systems that justified ageist beliefs and practices that supported paying younger workers significantly less to do the same work both with entry-level service jobs and high-level management positions. As well, older jobseekers, stakeholders and service providers spoke to various intersecting social identities that further enhanced the risks of prolonged unemployment and financial insecurity faced by older workers. As one example, intersections of ageism, racism and sexism experienced by female-identifying older jobseekers deepened barriers to re-employment particularly for those within forms of gendered employment in which 'appearance', related to oldness and being racially 'other', was problematized by employers. Such systemic barriers could not be overcome solely through engagement in individualized practices recommended within employment support services, such as attempting to appear younger, reformatting resumes, or upgrading one's education.

However, while the ways intersecting social positions deepened precarity and barriers to re-employment were sometimes recognized by the various types of participants, the failure to address intersectionality in locating where the key problem of older jobseekers was located within policies and services also surfaced, such that the ultimate problem

was often located in older jobseekers marked out as stubborn, inflexible, unrealistic, outdated, and having a problematic mindset. Moreover, solutions emphasized and enacted began with the premise that whether or not intersecting forms of oppression existed they could not be changed, and the only locus for change was the older jobseeker. As such, the problems and solutions were often reduced to the single axis of age and an overly simplistic homogenous construction of 'the older worker', disregarding the ways in which intersections of identity markers matter within oppressive power relations embedded in contemporary employment services and labour markets.

Suzanne Huot: The Francophone minority community (FMC) in Metro Vancouver is among the most diverse in the country and immigrants are visibly engaged in community spaces (Delaisse et al., 2021). FMCs often centre the French language as a unifying aspect of identity (i.e., 'we are all Francophone') and forms of oppression experienced within an Anglophone majority society despite French being an official language in Canada. However, increasing attention has been paid to intersectionality within the community given Francophones' highly varied social positionings and relationships to the French language in light of its colonial histories and realities.

Our research identified socio-racial separations within the community that can influence its perceived cohesion (Delaisse et al., 2023). We drew on intersectionality mainly as part of the theoretical framework informing data analysis to understand how inequalities linked to the intersections of different identities with systems of oppression may contribute to particular ethno-racial populations settling in different municipalities, thus shaping their opportunities to engage in a range of occupations in French.

We drew on data from two studies; a multi-method ethnography of social integration and participation in Francophone community spaces (Delaisse et al., 2022) and a case study of community cohesion (Huot et al., 2023). The research question guiding our intersectional analysis was: What dynamics shape community cohesion in the diverse FMC of Metro Vancouver? We show that there are many forms of distancing in the community that are linked to multiple forms of exclusion and intersectional identity markers that are often racialized (i.e., referring to the "[...] multiple processes whereby bodies to come be seen as 'having' a racial identity") (Ahmed, 2002, p. 46).

During our ethnography we observed differences in who was participating in varied community spaces. Federal immigration policies favoured the immigration of young, European professionals, many of whom came to Canada on temporary work visas, often with no dependents, and having clear pathways to permanent residency. We observed that the urban lifestyle of participants from Europe intersected with their immigration status, age, family composition (e.g., often single/no kids at time of immigration), country of origin, and often their race (typically racialized as White).

The intersection of their situation within systems of power was favourable, enhancing their access to services and occupations for Francophones in Vancouver. Participants in our study who were racialized as 'non-white' more often lived in the suburbs, given the need for more affordable and appropriate housing for some of their larger families. It could be more challenging to participate in Francophone spaces given their parental responsibilities and the longer commute into the city to access services and participate in events. Of note, some participants from Europe were also racialized as non-white, and so while they participated in some of the same spaces as other migrants from Europe, their experiences differed.

Some Francophone community spaces were intended as more homogenous (e.g., places of worship attracting people who shared the same faith); thus, people within those spaces described feeling a sense of belonging there. However, when spaces were meant to serve the full community in all its diversity (e.g., organizations obtaining government funding to provide services), it was more problematic to observe a lack of diversity within them. When a space became 'dominated' by a particular ethno-racial group, it implicitly excluded those 'othered' from that population (e.g., not seeing oneself represented on a board of directors), in part by discouraging their participation. Thus, participants spoke about the ways they withdrew from certain Francophone spaces.

Overall, we found that community members who were not racialized as white did not seem to have access to the same types of opportunities given that 'ethnic' organizations tended to have little-to-no funding and were 'peripheral' to the dominant/formal Francophonie. For instance, one study participant explained: "*I'm telling that you a lot of visible minorities often told us that they prefer to integrate themselves into the Anglophone communities because they are better welcomed there than in the Francophone communities* [...] *because they always feel like they are on the periphery, they do not feel they are* 'inside' [...] t*he Francophonie, because they say 'there is the formal Francophonie and the peripheral Francophonie.' They always feel peripheral, they are not at the decision-making tables, they do not participate*."

'Mainstream' organizations that were better funded tended to be 'normative', thus reinforcing dominant social expectations. To support community cohesion, an intersectional lens is thus required as it was found to be insufficient to simply offer opportunities for occupations in French, assuming that all French-speakers are similarly socially positioned within systems of power. Community spaces need to consider what those occupations are, when they are offered, where they are offered, by whom they are offered and so on, in order to ensure their inclusivity. Ultimately, meaningful representation, rejecting mere tokenism, is important and there is a need to avoid centering the French language at the expense of community members' intersecting positionalities within systems of oppression.

What Intersectionality Is *Not*

As we engage in a process of more deeply understanding the utility of an intersectional approach and the ways it becomes an effective means of examining occupation, prior to sharing our reflections on our research examples we first turn attention to the importance of identifying common misunderstandings and naming what intersectionality is not. With respect to putting a theory into action, oftentimes a formulaic approach is a means of ensuring the 'theoretical tool' is applied as intended. However, intersectionality's features make the use of a checklist incompatible with its intent. For instance, the interrelated, context-dependent and dynamic nature of social positioning and systems of power means that a static checklist or pre-determined steps to applying intersectionality would undoubtedly fail to take into account the nuance and situated-nature of phenomena that the theory is intended to examine.

Rather than there being one way to apply intersectionality, it can instead be better understood as a critical thinking tool that takes shape according to each unique situation (Ambrosio & Silva, 2022; Bailey et al., 2019). This is exemplified in the co-authors'

examples from their own work applying intersectionality in four different settings. Instrumentalizing intersectionality into a step-wise approach risks taking the theory away from its roots as it is adapted to fit the contexts, rather than including those contexts as part of the intersectional analysis. Crenshaw (1989, 1993) and other intersectionality scholars have clearly shown how intersectionality, which inherently attends to power relations, necessitates moving beyond a positivist epistemological approach that relies on extensive categorization, dualistic understandings, and static, neutral views on phenomena (Bauer, 2014; Smith et al., 2025).

A positivist approach to actioning intersectionality has been considered misleading, setting up a situation where intersectionality is a "critical theory without a critical praxis" (Collins & Bilge, 2020, p. 129; Ferree, 2018). This is reflected in many uses of intersectionality within the occupation-focused literature, with authors using the term intersectionality without indicating how and where the research methodologies, epistemologies or even data analysis were intersectional and in what ways (Reid et al., 2025a). For instance, utilizing the term intersectionality in the title and abstract, or mentioning the relevance of intersectionality as a theory in the introduction or discussion sections of a research paper fails to employ intersectionality in a critical way or move towards intersectionality as a research approach. Further, criticality is not enacted when claiming to use an intersectional approach solely to ensure a 'representative' sample, aligned with positivist aims, by designating more than one variable marking a separately identifiable social marker of difference (e.g., disabled, mental health status, socioeconomic status) as inclusion criteria without critical attention to the influence of systems of power.

Another commonly seen misapplication of intersectionality can be observed in what Watermeyer and Swartz (2023) refer to as selective intersectionality, whereby exclusion is only considered in certain contexts and forms. Selective application of intersectionality emphasizes certain aspects of identity above others resulting in unintentional neutralizing and invisibilizing of the very issues that need attention. Though Ned et al. (2024, (p. 2)) highlight contradictions within such critiques, arguing that by "[...] tacitly speaking on behalf of a so-called universalized disabled subject in South Africa, they unwittingly reproduce imperial circuits of knowledge production", Watermeyer & Swartz (2023) point to exclusions of political issues interwoven across identities of race, sexual orientation and disability when discussion only focuses on intersections of race and sexual orientation.

A further example of a misapplication of intersectionality is seen through the common practice of listing a range of personal identifiers as part of a positionality statement. Naming one's own social markers of difference is not an effective means of applying intersectionality because doing so reinforces the use of a single-axis approach where each individual identity is considered separate from all others. Further, listing one's identities without contextualizing how those identities interact with relevant systems of power over-exposes the researcher's identities without serving to strengthen their research positioning. It is the relationship among and within social markers of difference and systems that are relevant in positionality statements to identify and acknowledge the structures that create advantage and disadvantage, and how the researcher influences the research context as a result.

Esposito (2024) goes on to state that conceptualizing the lived realities of people is "ultimately intersectional in nature, because human beings cannot literally or metaphorically be divided by their personal identities and backgrounds - and neither

can the different forms of unique oppression affecting them" (p. 507). This is because considering social markers of difference each on their own fails to take into account the context that those social markers of difference influence and are influenced by; and it would take more than a brief positionality statement presenting as a listing to describe the ways that social markers interrelate with one another and the larger systems of power.

Contributions of Intersectionality to Occupation-Focused Research

It is clear that intersectionality has much potential and value when it comes to examining and politicizing occupation across various populations and contexts. The key challenge in doing so is moving intersectionality theory to methodological application so as to facilitate research that mobilizes and enacts changes at a systems level, ensuring expansion beyond identifying and problematizing what changes are necessary. Occupation-focused researchers can critically reflect on their own contributions, challenges and future utility of intersectionality as a methodological approach to exploring occupation. For example, Ambrosio & Silva (2022, p. 7) argued: "Since the experiences of oppression, discrimination, violation, exclusion, and inequality are interrelated and supported by identity elements that modify interpersonal relationships, ways of being in the world, occupations and human activities, we are interested, as occupational therapists, in approaching tools that can help us fully understand these processes, seeking to break with other forms of oppression."

Critical reflections upon each of the four examples shared in this article follow, pointing to challenges, limitations and what could be done differently to better integrate intersectionality to the fullness of its potential. In line with the postulations proposed in this paper and informed by the broader literature on applying intersectionality theory methodologically, we discuss the possibilities for this theory within occupation-focused research. We contend that such application will make possible deeper understandings of social dynamics, occupational possibilities (Laliberte Rudman, 2010), ways of life and survival strategies that some groups create to live their everyday lives, as well the systemic forces that make such strategies necessary (Melo & Lopes, 2023).

Critical reflections on examples in relation to postulations

We presented four postulations for enacting intersectionality as a methodological framework in occupation-focused research. In this first part of our discussion, we relate these postulations to the study examples, showing their utility for critical reflexivity. In addition, this reflexivity demonstrates how enacting intersectionality from the design to the knowledge mobilization phases, as opposed to adding it in primarily as an analytical tool, has much potential to strengthen its methodological enactment in occupation-focused research.

The postulation most readily addressed through all the examples in this paper is that of integrating intersectionality to counter the limits of a single axis framework (Crenshaw, 1989, 1993). Given that each study explored different occupations and populations, it can be recognized that each researcher adhered to Misra's (Misra et al., 2021) and Henning's (2015) recommendation that the intersections most relevant to the research questions are the ones that should be prioritized. In doing so, we moved beyond

the single-axis tendency to focus on one single social marker of difference (e.g, age, gender, sexuality, language) and instead critically explored how the populations were positioned as a result of their various identities and contexts.

The utility of the second postulation, that of identifying marginalization outside prototypical identities (Carbado et al., 2013; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), can be highlighted using the unemployment and employment support services study occupational therapy practice study. Adopting an intersectionality lens in conducting unemployment analysis was essential to resist homogenizing 'older job seekers', a common discursive strategy that reinforces neoliberalism through locating the problems faced by such job seekers in assumed negative impacts of aging processes on bodies, minds, skills, knowledge or motivation. In doing so, the analysis was able to resist and disrupt the prototypical identity of older jobseekers as White, middle- to upper-class privileged males who have a range of choices to maintain productivity, a prototype discursively employed to obscure the oppressions faced by older workers with diverse intersectional positionalities tied to gender, social class, ability status, and race (Krekula & Vickerstaff, 2020).

When analyzing occupational therapy practitioners who worked with people who experienced dissidence of gender and sexuality, an intersectional approach was essential to question and reflect on stereotypes about what it means 'to be a woman or a man'. Some practitioners had gender -based prototypes in mind when working with the transgender population, and employing intersectionality made it possible to critically analyze how those understandings are related to *docilization* and *disciplinarization* of bodies (Foucault, 1995). Gender expectations intersected with class, race/ethnicity, educational status, and sexuality stereotypes. For example, based on their own and colleagues' behaviour as women, a practitioner had understood that a transgender woman should be polite, sit gently, to dress with longer/more formal clothes, not talk very loud, and not show public affection with a partner. Through applying intersectionality during the analytical process, it was possible to interrupt the essentialist notions of gender and articulate how behaviors labeled as 'subaltern' are based in sexist, racist, classist, and other prejudiced assumptions, calling on practitioners to reflect on how their work can negatively contribute to the production and perpetuation of gender-based inequities and violence.

Critical reflexivity on the study examples in relation to the third postulate of recognizing interrelations with systems (Collins & Bilge, 2020; Pewewardy, 2003) highlights the importance of generating complex, multi-faceted understandings. This postulate was challenging to integrate into the analysis of the study conducted in the Metro Vancouver FMC as the methods adopted during the study design centered data collection with individuals that made it more challenging to explore interrelations within the systems. While across the two studies drawn upon in our example a range of methods were used (e.g., observations, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, focus groups), there is potential to integrate additional methods that can more directly study relevant systemic elements. For example, in a more recent study (Delaisse et al., 2025), the research team included a method for analyzing the dominant discourses adopted in policy documents. The ways these discourses are then found to be reproduced and/or rejected by community members can provide deeper understanding of how participants' experiences are shaped by the social systems they are situated within.

In the study with 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous Peoples exploring the interrelations with systems was a vital aspect of the research study and key to answering one of the research aims (e.g., to explore nuanced understandings of how specific contextual aspects shape 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous peoples' daily occupation-based experiences). This postulation was part of the foundation of the research and evidenced in the consultative and collaborative nature of the study design and implementation. When preparing the ethics application, community consultations involved discussions about institutional power dynamics and what values were non-negotiable for the community to proceed with the research. Further, intersectionality was employed in the design and selection of the research questions, which specifically asked participants about their experiences with respect to how their meaningful occupations were influenced by the places, spaces and dynamics that they interacted with. This led to data that when analyzed, helped identify interrelations with systems of power, identities and occupations.

Reflecting on the fourth postulate of addressing social positions as dynamic and context dependent (Gopaldas, 2013; Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015) also pointed to key lessons to take forward into future research. The research example on community cohesion within FMCs could have better integrated this postulation into the study design. People's identities, positionalities and subject positions remain dynamic. As an example, for some participants, the categorization of 'refugee' is often one assigned through policy to label a person experiencing forced migration. While their experiences within Canada may be shaped by such categorizations, for instance governing their eligibility for government-funded services, the centrality of such subjectivities to people's identities should not be assumed. We have found that within the context of migration, which inherently entails a shift to one's social position and context, addressing these shifts should be essential to work seeking to integrate intersectionality.

The study with 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous Peoples challenged assumptions about categories and identities being fixed or static, and did so through examining the ever-changing nature of social positioning as something that is context-dependent. For example, the locations of the sessions were carefully considered, as each location or setting would influence the participant and data. Having trusted, Indigenous-led organizations as a place to meet with participants was not only crucial to honoring the relationships built throughout the research process, but supported exploration of the ways in which positioning in society is influenced by who they are, what they are doing and the nature of the context. If the data gathering sessions were to take place solely at a university, the participants would be positioned differently than if the sessions took place at Indigenous organizations they were familiar with. This highlights the importance of applying an intersectional approach to research in ways that acknowledges how context can and does influence the positioning of populations, and how these positions are far from static.

Further considerations in moving intersectionality theory to methodological application

Through our collective dialogue regarding our research experiences, other points of consideration beyond the postulations arose. A common situation evidenced by our examples, especially during the design and conceptualization of research studies, is the question of which intersecting contexts and structures of power should be considered in the research and how to examine them within the larger social and research contexts.

There is no one correct way to do this, leading Henning (2015) to identify this 'unlimited openness character' as one of the challenges of applying an intersectional approach. When undertaking research that draws on intersectionality, it is not necessary or beneficial to have an infinite list of social markers of difference, instead, it is important to consider the intersections that are relevant to produce analyses that will answer the research questions in ways that situate oppressions contextually, politically and historically and thereby turn attention to required systemic transformations. This is further articulated by Ambrosio & Silva (2022, p. 9) as they argued the following:

> Intersectionality, enunciated by black feminists as a contribution to build an Amefrican, decolonial, critical perspective in occupational therapy, brings us closer to occupations, human activities, and everyday life, considering varied contexts crossed by a series of sociohistorical and cultural processes and impacted by the crossroads of hegemonic systems of power.

As suggested by Misra et al. (2021, p. 13), it is important that researchers consider "which intersections matter most for the research question being posed, focusing on the intersections that seem most salient based on the research focus". However, it is vital that research remains reflexive and responsive to the malleability of social positioning and how categories of identities often stem from oppression in the first place (Misra et al., 2021).

For example, in the study on Metro Vancouver's FMC, the participating community members were from a range of national and ethnic backgrounds who are diverse with respect to immigration status, additional languages spoken, gender, race, socio-economic status, religion, etc. We adopted intersectionality to avoid placing forms of discrimination or inequalities on a 'hierarchy' and to recognize multiple belongings and social positionings within and beyond the community. This entailed including intersectionality as part of the study design when developing the theoretical framework and aiming for diversity when recruiting the participant sample (e.g., maximum variation sampling).

The theoretical framing then helped us reflect more deeply during the analysis stage in particular, identifying the power dynamics that may contribute to the types of socio-racial distancing we observed. For instance, we considered the potential influence of the region's high cost of living. Many social services are centralized in Vancouver so those who were closer to these lived in more expensive housing, while more affordable housing was located in regional municipalities, marginalizing those in the suburbs from access (e.g., high cost of transit). Socio-economic status was found to intersect with country of origin, race, immigration category, and family status, among other markers. Intersectionality enabled us to move beyond a racial dichotomy of White/inclusion and racialized/exclusion to better understand the complex dynamics shaping the experiences of study participants.

Understanding what aspects to focus on in the analysis was a dynamic process informed by our combination of observational and interview methods that helped us identify spatial separations within the community and then seek out potential explanations for these through our application of the theory. Further, the examples outlined in this paper highlight the importance of a theoretical framework that creates space for an intersectional approach to be part of the foundation of the study.

For instance, in the study example addressing older workers, an intersectionality framework was only introduced at the stage of analysis, rather than being explicitly integrated into the foundation of the study design or into initial recruitment approaches. Integration into data analysis enabled interpretation to extend beyond a single-axis framework focused on age or a 'neutral' notion of professional practice to critically unpack how intersecting social positions mattered for the negotiation of long-term unemployment and the production of precarious lives, particularly within the contexts of employment support services and varying work sectors.

However, while there was some attention to recruiting persons experiencing long-term unemployment or employment support practitioners who were differently positioned as data analysis subsequently informed recruitment strategies, not initially integrating intersectionality theory into the design of this collaborative ethnography and the interviews set limitations on the data were that generated and our capacities to address how a diversity of intersecting social positions matter in the negotiation and experience of systems purportedly designed to resolve long-term unemployment and professional practice. As one example, while 'looking younger' emerged as a strategy promoted by employment counsellors, how this strategy was differentially recommended and taken up in relation to gender, work sector, body type, ability status, and other markers of difference could have been further examined.

In contrast, in the study example that involved consultation and co-creation with 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous Peoples, an intersectional approach was part of the foundation of the research and was integrated as part of the creation of the research study rather than introduced once the study was designed or implemented. This allowed for intersectionality to be woven into the design, implementation and analysis phase of the research to reveal complex and dynamic intersections and influences that a late-stage integration of intersectionality would not have afforded.

A critical part of applying intersectionality to research involves reflecting on how data analysis will be structured and carried out as part of a larger system and context rather than as something the researcher does in a 'data vacuum.' While data gathering is of course a crucial part of research, it is equally important to critically explore the ways in which data are analyzed and how that shapes larger discourses and interpretations of the messages from the findings. In the doctoral research co-created with 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous Peoples for example, from the outset of the study the community of interest was consulted to gather diverse perspectives and input on how data should be analyzed and the appropriate means of then sharing findings back to and beyond the community of participants.

The decision regarding how the results take shape, along with how and where the knowledge is shared, is not a decision that the researcher should make alone if intersectionality is intended to be part of the methodological approach. This is particularly true in research with Indigenous Peoples, as knowledge is considered sacred and is shared through teachings that are not meant to then be shared to others without clear informed consent of through which platforms, to which audiences and for what purposes. The example highlighted here applied an intersectional approach to data analysis by not only asking participants how they would like their data included and presented (e.g., written, photos, etc.) but was complemented with an invitation to be involved in the analysis itself. Through these data analysis sessions, participants were

able to ensure that their voices, perspectives and concerns were heard and integrated into findings and knowledge mobilization.

Critical reflexivity in our study examples also enhanced our awareness of the importance of being responsive to the power relations present within the research process itself and at different levels, a key feature of intersectional methodology emphasized by Haynes et al. (2020). As one example, reflecting back on the dynamics of power in the research process in the unemployment study, a fuller integration of intersectionality would have deepened attention to how the positionalities of those generating data with older participants shaped relations with older worker participants, given that field researchers were younger, employed and university educated. On-going reflexive memoing regarding the power relations present in data generation sessions, in turn, would have further situated our analysis within the research context, in addition to the context of the employment support services. In contrast, the study with 2S/LGBTQ+ Indigenous Peoples demonstrated how power can be continually negotiated and attended to in research, speaking to the alliance between intersectional and participatory/collaborative research processes.

Conclusion

This work recognizes the distinct challenges faced when actioning intersectionality in occupation-focused research, and contributes to literature attempting to deepen the use of intersectionality as a means to address oppression. Each of the examples described above had strengths and gaps in their application of intersectionality, articulated through an analysis guided by the four postulations. Drawing on these postulations and interdisciplinary literature addressing translating intersectionality theory into methodological application can strengthen its critical application, thereby deepening understandings of occupations as situated and embedded within and across power relations, diverse contexts and intersecting social positionalities. In turn, such intersectional understandings can raise critical awareness of the need for systemic changes that resist and disrupt oppressive power relations and also point to directions for such action. Given that applying intersectionality in different stages of research will raise different analytical possibilities or limitations, a continuous process of critically revising work mobilizing intersectionality is essential. This will make it possible to identify gaps, create new research questions and refine methods to better generate relevant and aligned research practices.

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All authors contributed to the conception, organization, writing and discussion of the paper. They revised the content and approved the final version of the text.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

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[1] The notion of social markers of difference is fundamental to highlight the variety of markers that can impact an intersectional analysis, such as gender, class, physical characteristics, sexuality, marital status, geographic location, age, among others. In this paper we use the words identity and identification as synonymous with social markers of difference, aligned with a post-identitarian and anti-essentialist perspective.

[2] One classic example is the Graffen Reed x General Motors case. General Motors was accused of racism and sexism, because they did not hire Black women. However, the analysis of the proof was done in a fragmented way, concluding that the there were no racial discrimination, because General Motors hired Black men to work at the assembly line and there was no sexism, because White women were hired to work as secretaries (Crenshaw, 2004; Hirano, 2019).

[3] The term methodology has been defined in various ways. In this paper, it is used to refer to an overall logic guiding the conduct of research that is inclusive of theory and principles that provide the rationale or justification for methods employed (Carter & Little, 2007).