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## **Social inequalities portrayed in the occupational experiences of girls ahead of incarceration in Brazil**

Tatiana Maria Marques Tironi a)

Maria João Leote de Carvalho b)

Adriana de França Drummond a)

Luciana Assis Costa a)

- a) Departamento de Terapia Ocupacional [Department of Occupational Therapy], Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais -UFMG, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
- b) CICS.NOVA - Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Sciences, NOVA School of Social Sciences and Humanities (NOVA FCSH), Lisbon, Portugal

### **ABSTRACT**

Literature demonstrates that most girls incarcerated in juvenile justice institutions in Brazil come from socially vulnerable groups that face social inequality and racial and gender discrimination, which results in occupational inequities. This study aims to understand the daily lives of young Brazilian girls ahead of their incarceration based on their occupational experiences and clarify how these occupations express the deep social inequalities that mark their life trajectories. This cross-sectional qualitative exploratory study used oral history as the research method. Twelve young girls incarcerated at a juvenile justice institution in Minas Gerais, Brazil in 2020 were the study participants. The impact of gender and class issues on these young girls' daily experiences and occupations point toward the oppressions and social inequalities to which they were exposed since childhood. Their life stories were marked by daily violations of their rights, such as the difficulty of accessing and staying in school, exploitation as child labor, the lack of leisure opportunities, exposure to various forms of violence, including sexual violence, and general vulnerability. The concept of occupation, read through the lens of intersectionality, makes it possible to understand the social inequalities that cross the daily lives of vulnerable populations, as well as provoking a critical and activist position in the area in the face of occupational injustices.

### **KEYWORDS**

## Occupational science, Gender, Daily occupations, Juvenile justice system, Occupational injustice

Previous studies have demonstrated that, internationally, girls and women constitute 2-9% of the incarcerated population (Joosen et al., 2016; Rosa, 2018) in the prison and juvenile justice systems (Pereira et al., 2015). Since 1990, Brazil has had specific legislation aimed at children and adolescents, based on civic and social rights, including those of adolescents who committed infractions. Juvenile justice, based on the “full protection” of adolescents between 12 and 18 years of age, replaced the terminology “crime” with “infraction act”, and regulated socio-educational measures for young people who commit an infraction (Pereira et al., 2015). These measures are classified into six typologies, ranging from a warning, in milder cases of infractions, to deprivation of liberty, which is the most severe measure. Unlike the criminal system, the juvenile socio-educational system seeks in its conceptual bases to support adolescents, offering protective support that ensures the development of coping skills and accountability for the acts committed, in an educational and socializing perspective and not restricted to the punitive character (Pereira et al., 2015). Another difference from the adult prison system is the maximum time for complying with the measure, which cannot exceed 3 years, as well as the non-binding of the infraction to a criminal record. However, in practice, one of the scathing criticisms of this model has been the reproduction of the principles and values of a coercive and punitive security policy, very close to the prison model (Gisi et al., 2021; Menicucci & Carneiro, 2011).

Though the proportion of the female population that is incarcerated is lower than that of the male population, there has been a recent increase in the incarceration of girls and women in all continents (Walmsley, 2017). In Brazil, growth in the incarceration rate among the female population is higher than that among men (Germano et al., 2018), and is at a considerably high value (Fundação João Pinheiro, 2022).

Most incarcerated Brazilian girls come from socially vulnerable groups that face social inequality and racial and gender discrimination (Arruda, 2020; Germano et al., 2018; Martins, 2016; Norkevicius, 2020; Oliveira et al., 2018; Valente & Suxberger, 2019), which results in occupational inequities. Their socioeconomic background tends to be homogeneous, and they tend to be poor, less educated, young Black girls (Brazil, 2019). These girls are excluded, oppressed, and marginalized even before the law finds them guilty, and their occupations, which are not socially accepted, are usually sanctioned (Melo & Valença, 2016).

Data on the socioeconomic status of young Brazilians, particularly those from low-income and Black and Brown communities, highlight the inequalities that infringe upon their rights. According to Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística data (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), 2021), 10.1 million young Brazilians aged between 14 and 29 had not completed high school in 2019, with 71% of these being considered Black or Brown. The illiteracy rate also reflects the educational inequality between Blacks and whites in Brazil. White and illiterate people aged 15 years or more

represented 3%, Black or Brown people 8% (IBGE, 2020). In 2021, the unemployment rate among workers identified as Black or Brown was 16.2%, while that of whites was 11.7% (IBGE, 2021).

This is also demonstrated by the disproportionate representation of young people in juvenile detention. Approximately 2 million children and young people aged 4 to 17 in Brazil are not in school, with the largest number being in the 17-year-old age group, where 915,455 youth are not part of the educational system (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira: INEP, 2018). Among girls in socio-educational detention in 2018, 52% were not enrolled in school at the time of their detainment. Regarding their education, 84% had not finished elementary school and the majority (75%) were between 6th and 9th grade, with a 3-to-5-year gap in their schooling (INEP, 2018).

Young people face significant challenges in accessing employment, with a three-times higher rate of unemployment compared to adults. When employed, 75% of young people work in the informal market (INEP, 2018). A study on 207 female socio-educational detainees in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil between 2015-2019 who were between 12 and 19 years old (16 years old on average) found that 77% were unemployed, both formally and informally (Tironi, 2021). The situation for women and girls is worse, with widespread inequalities in areas such as domestic labor exploitation and sexual exploitation. In Brazil alone, there are 500,000 reported cases of sexual exploitation against children and adolescents annually, with 75% of victims being girls, particularly Black girls. These girls often face physical abuse, sexual assault, and are vulnerable to alcohol and drug abuse (Alves, 2021). It is also worth noting that these experiences are not uncommon for girls within the country's juvenile criminal justice system. This means that the country's socioeconomic and cultural conditions directly influence the lack of opportunities and occupational injustices faced by young Brazilians, particularly girls in the juvenile criminal system.

Despite some general information available about these girls, there are still few studies on their experiences before and after being deprived of freedom (Arruda, 2020; Conselho Nacional de Justiça: CNJ, 2015; Núñez, 2019; Rosa, 2018; Staines, 2017). Given this gap, this study aims to understand the daily lives of young Brazilian girls before their incarceration, based on their occupational experiences, and clarify how these occupations express the deep social inequalities that mark their life trajectories. Their activities of daily living, referred to as occupations, are believed to reflect the socioeconomic, political, cultural, and subjective aspects that pervade the lives of these girls (Bailliard, 2016; Drumond et al., 2021; Farias et al., 2019; Hocking, 2012; Pollard et al., 2008). The findings of this study can be connected and seen through the lens of occupational science. Furthermore, the study intends to contribute to international debates that have situated occupations in the context of power relations and social institutions, from a critical occupational perspective (Farias & Laliberte Rudman, 2016; Hammell, 2019; Hocking, 2012; Molineux & Whiteford, 1999; Ramugondo, 2018; Rudman et al., 2012).

## **Daily Occupations from an Intersectional Perspective**

Many models and approaches toward occupations utilize a methodological individualistic strand, whereby occupations are understood as residing in the individual's experience while disregarding contextual influences external to this experience. However, this approach fails to clarify the rich complexity of occupations (Bunting, 2016; Costa, 2016). According to Laliberte Rudman (2015), everyday occupations can be sustained by social relations of power and oppression. Socioeconomic and political influences trigger hegemonic occupational choices within the constraints of habits and contextual conditions, thus maintaining historically determined patterns and perpetuating occupational injustices (Galvaan, 2015).

The sanctioning of an occupation does not necessarily correspond to its legal status. Many unsanctioned occupations could be legal within a specific jurisdiction. Sanctioning, as a social-political process, is facilitated by a mechanism of social control that varies according to the country, region, ethnicity, race, social class, health status, disability, age, gender identification, sexuality, and sexual orientation, among other factors (Kiepek et al., 2019).

Sexual activity is one such occupation where the degree of social sanction depends on factors such as location of engagement (e.g., long term care facility versus a private home), sex or gender of those engaged, consent, financial exchange, marital status, ethnicity, religion, or age of partners. (Kiepek et al., 2019, p. 343)

Focusing exclusively on the individual as an autonomous agent can lead to moral mistakes by disregarding the complexity and multidimensionality of cultural, historical, political, and economic relationships that impact occupational relationships (Bailliard, 2016). When the subjects are reported for some crimes, they are generally blamed based on the assumption that their trajectories are due to deviant behaviors arising from their reprehensible choices (Kiepek et al., 2019; Melo & Valenca, 2016). Therefore, analyzing the girls' life stories based on the construct of personal choices fails to address the complexity of crime in Brazil. This is because it disregards its multidimensionality and, thereby, the marginalization, discrimination, and invisibility of these subjects in the context of occupational injustices. Hence, occupations must be considered social practices influenced by social, cultural, political, economic, and historically situated dimensions (Bailliard, 2016).

One method to understand girls' oppressive relationships is through the approach of everyday lives (read as quotidian). This method breaks the analytical dichotomy between structure and action. Consequently, the analysis emphasizes the relation between individuals, interactional acts, or events, with a global social structure through a network of social mediations (Costa & Souza, 2021). The concept of everyday life is assumed in this analytical exercise, which, despite its polysemy, constitutes a promising way for obtaining a critical-reflexive perspective on occupations in the field of occupational science. It is necessary to align it with a reading that links the lasting and hidden social structures with their expressions in everyday life (Martins, 2014), and perceive the sensitive and practical side: the lived experience, fugitive subjectivity, emotions, affection, habits, behaviors, and representations of the imaginary (Lefebvre, 1991). It is in everyday life that stories are built with their cultural and social meanings, marked by the forms of interpersonal and institutional relationships (Pais, 2003, 2005, 2007). Thus,

everyday life comprises experiences, bargains, resistances, innovations, and dilemmas (Pais, 2007). Pais (2007) observed that this enables perceiving both the subjects' autonomy of choice and the limitation that they suffer in this supposed autonomy, based on the structure of the social systems to which they are inserted. Thus, subjects have their autonomy restricted by the context in which they live.

The concept of intersectionality can be used to analyze the effect of different forms of social oppression on the daily lives of incarcerated girls in Brazil, given their homogeneous profile marked by inequality and social stigma, to understand the effects of social inequalities in occupations. There has been a recent resurgence in studies approaching the social markers of gender, class, race, and ethnicity from an intersectional perspective (Rosa, 2018; Silva & Menezes, 2020). These studies use this concept in at least two forms: "as an analytical strategy, [and] as a form of social praxis, with an emphasis on the connections between knowledge and social justice" (Silva & Menezes, 2020, p. 1).

Intersectionality is constituted from a critical view of the concept of gender together with a proposal to expand the rights to minority groups claimed by feminist movements, LGBTQIA+, and Black movements, among others (Arruda, 2020; Silva & Menezes, 2020). In Brazil, this debate began around 1980 with Lélia Gonzales (Goes, 2019; Gonçalves, 2019; Ribeiro, 2016). However, the concept of intersectionality was only formulated by Crenshaw in her PhD thesis in the United States in 1989 (Akotirene, 2019; Ribeiro, 2016; Rosa, 2018). Gonzales was a pioneer in this discussion, denouncing the racist and patriarchal structure of Brazilian society, expanding the debate on racial and gender issues beyond an economic relationship by considering ideological and political aspects. This perspective challenged the existing feminist theory that largely focused on the experiences of white women. Ribeiro (2016) stated that in a "society with a slaver, patriarchal, and classist heritage, the theoretical and practical contribution that black feminism brings is increasingly necessary to think about a new civilizational framework" (p. 103).<sup>1</sup> According to Akotirene (2019), Black women are subject to multiple forms of discrimination and oppression due to the overlap of their gender, race, and class.

Intersectionality addresses the way in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression, and other discriminatory systems create basic inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, classes, and racial and ethnic minorities (Akotirene, 2019; Akotirene & Lopes, 2020; Silva & Menezes, 2020). The challenge of analyzing everyday life from an intersectional perspective is the need to emphasize the connection of an individual, interactional act, or event with a global social structure through a network of social mediations (Choo & Ferree, 2010). The challenge in the case of the girls in this study was in analyzing how their daily occupations were marked by social determinants and how society presents itself by reading between the lines of subjectivities.

## **Methodology**

The description of the methodology was based on the 2021 Brazilian Portuguese version of the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) by Souza et al. (2021). COREQ was established by Tong et al. (2007) and is recommended for reporting

research that relies on interviews or focus groups. Adherence to COREQ domains and criteria enhanced the study's credibility.

### **Study design**

This article presents the findings of a cross-sectional qualitative exploratory study, derived from a master's thesis from a Federal University in Brazil. Oral history was chosen as the research method as it allows individuals belonging to social segments generally excluded from official histories to be heard and leave records of their worldview (Conway, 2014). Social memory—as a process and not merely a deposit of data—and language are loaded with representations and denote the dynamic social environment in which individuals and social groups are inserted. The individual version, affected by aspects resulting from individual peculiarities, is often marked by the collective as well (Cassab & Ruscheinsky, 2007). The oral history methodology is not guided by the quantitative criteria of its sample, but by the quality of the interviews conducted and the objectives of the research at a given moment and within a given context (Alberti, 2013). “Oral history is fundamentally concerned with creating diverse possibilities of manifestation for those who are excluded from official history, and who do not have strong enough forms to confront social injustices” (Pinto, 2002, p. 95).<sup>1</sup>

Oral history focuses on the study of people's life experiences (Alberti, 2013; Freitas, 2006) based on their testimony, perceptions, histories, and cultural background (Alberti, 2013). As stated by Cassab and Ruscheinsky (2007), “life history is a valuable tool in uncovering the meanings of everyday life” (p. 7).<sup>1</sup>

### **Data collection**

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) (CAAE No. 39351820.2.0000.5149). Ethical commitments were fulfilled in all phases of the research. Data collection was undertaken with formal authorization from the Under Secretary for Socio-Educational Care in Minas Gerais [Subsecretaria de Atendimento Socio-Educativo de Minas Gerais; SUASE], the Research Ethics Committee of UFMG, the girls, and their families or legal guardians.

The graduate student who conducted the interviews already had a strong connection with the girls, having previously worked at the institution where the research was undertaken. This pre-existing bond of trust allowed for the successful use of the oral history method and resulted in obtaining detailed and intimate accounts of the girls' lives. Furthermore, the willingness of the young women to participate was largely influenced by their desire to be heard and to have their stories told. The research objectives were personally presented to the interviewees by reading the consent and assent form. Participation in the research was completely voluntary, and the interviewees, family members, or the SUASE were not remunerated for participation.

The interviews were conducted from October to November 2020 in the center's service room, where the interviewer could be alone with the girls being interviewed with the door closed. Interviews were monitored visually by a socio-educational security agent who stayed outside the room at a distance. The interviews began with a narrative generative question about the study topic to stimulate the main narrative: “I would like you to tell me your life story. Start with your birth, and then all the things that happened until you

came to the center. Take your time and tell the story in detail.” During the interview, other questions emerged spontaneously, which contributed toward providing an in-depth and better understanding of the research topic. These questions served as the investigation stage of the narratives through which fragments that had previously not been detailed were clarified (Flick, 2004). Interview information, such as date, duration, identifier of each person, peculiarities of the interview, and expressions of the interviewee, was recorded in a notebook (Alberti, 2004; Flick, 2004; Montysuma, 2006).

The interviews were conducted in a friendly environment, since they were alone in a safe environment, the interviewer was of the same sex, and there was already a pre-established bond and relationship of trust. It was explained to the girls that they could interrupt or withdraw their participation at any time during the research, and that their wishes would be respected without any adverse consequences or interference in the fulfillment of the socio-educational measure. Thus, the girls were made to feel at ease in the interview space.

### Study population

The study was conducted with 12 girls undergoing incarceration at the only center for imprisonment of girls in the state of Minas Gerais. The institution hosts up to 43 girls; however, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number was reduced to 12 girls. As the judiciary freed or progressed most adolescents undergoing restrictive measures, others were placed in Differentiated Distance Monitoring Regime (RDAD), also known as home detention. Thus, interviews were conducted with all the girls present at the unit during the data collection period.

Table 1 demonstrates that the girls interviewed were between 15 and 19 years old, with half of them self-identifying as Black (black and brown), and the other half as white. Most of them were single, had no children, and had an education level between the 6th and 7th grades of elementary school. As the minimum monthly wage at the time of the interviews was R\$1,039.00, most families had an income of less than two minimum monthly wages and comprised four to five people who depended directly on this income.

**Table 1. Sociodemographic profile of the young women interviewed**

Pseudonym	Age (years)	Race	Education level	Marital Status	Children	Monthly Family Income / members
Barbarian	16	Black	6th year	Single	No	R\$2,500.00 / 4 people
Eliana	15	White	7th year	Single	Yes – her baby was 1 month old when she was apprehended	No information
Ester	19	Brown	1st year HS	Single	No	R\$1,000.00 / 5 people
Flavia	16	Brown	4th year	Single	No	No information
Giovana	18	White	Higher education ongoing	Single	No	R\$5,000.00 / 4 people

Jessica	18	White	6th year	Partnered	No	R\$1,200.00 / 5 people
Kenia	15	White	6th year	Single	No	R\$3,000.00 / 4 people
Kristiana	15	Brown	6th year	Partnered	Had a miscarriage	R\$1,500.00 / 2 people
Maria	16	White	8th grade	Partnered	Miscarriage after partner's assault	R\$1,000.00 / 2 people
Melissa	16	White	1st year HS	Single	No	R\$1,500.00 / 10 people
Miriam	17	Black	6th year	Single	No	R\$1,045.00 / 4 people
Tamires	15	Black	7th year	Separated	No	R\$1,045.00 / 5 people

### Data analysis and processing

The data analysis was performed by three researchers individually and collectively: the master's student, her advisor, and the co-advisor. The interviews were transcribed verbatim while preserving the paralinguistic characteristics (Brisola & Marcondes, 2011; Matos & Senna, 2011). The transcribed texts were then analyzed using two methods of narratives analysis within the methodology of oral history. The first method used—the narrative method—comprises a deep analysis of the unique experiences of each young woman by searching for authentic and unique elements in each narrative. The second method—the paradigmatic method—analyzes the similarities in the collected discourses and categorizes themes and generic causes to investigate generalizations regarding the studied group (Cury, 2013).

Three main themes emerged from the narratives and demonstrated the practices that constituted the daily lives of the girls, which related to study, work, and leisure: (i) fragility of educational bonds: school dropout and delay; (ii) child labor, sexual exploitation, and underemployment; (iii) lack of leisure opportunities in their daily lives. The analysis of the themes utilized the theoretical support of a sociological approach based on the concepts of intersectionality, youth, and everyday life. These themes have informed the discussion of the results presented below.

To maintain the ethical commitment regarding confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of the girls, the names presented are fictitious. All identifiable information about places, people, or other situations were eliminated from the quotes. Excerpts from the interviews have been kept in the original language (Brazilian Portuguese) and were translated into English after analysis by a translation professional. The accuracy of the translation was verified in conjunction with the authors to preserve the integrity of the interview content and maintain the original style and language of the girls.

### Findings

This section presents and discusses the results of the study organized around the three themes that portray the social inequalities faced by the girls at school, work, and leisure, focusing on their occupational experiences.

### **Fragility of educational bonds: School dropout and delay**

The first analysis focused on the narrative of the girls' daily lives related to the quality of their bonds with the school. Of the 12 girls interviewed, only one had pursued higher education. Upon entering the institution, she had to take a leave of absence, which interrupted her studies.

Among the girls, 9 had dropped out of school: two at age 9, two at 11, one at 12, two at 15, one at 16, and one was unable to specify. Half of the interviewees (6) reported that their discontinuation of schooling was related to drug use, which became part of their daily lives. Flávia stopped studying at the age of 11, in the 4th year, and had not attended school in the past 5 years. She reported constant conflicts in school because of drug use: "Ela relatou conflitos constantes na escola por causa do uso de drogas: Devido ao uso de drogas, que encontrei maus elementos na porta da escola, abandonei a escola, ou fiz uso de drogas atrás da escola." [Due to the use of drugs, I met bad people at the school gates, dropped out of school, or used drugs behind the school.] Another girl highlighted her history of truancy at age 16.

Interviewer: E as vezes que você saiu da escola, porque que você saiu?

Ester: Pra ficar na rua vagabundando.

Interviewer: O que que você ficava fazendo na rua?

Ester: Mexendo com droga.

[Interviewer: And the times you left school, why did you leave?

Ester: To hang around on the street.

Interviewer: What have you been doing on the street?

Ester: Messing with drugs.]

Melissa revealed that she dropped out of school because of her boyfriend. She stated that he was extremely jealous, revealing a daily life of submission to him.

Aí eu parei de estudar por causa dele, né?! ... tudo que eu fazia lá, as meninas que conhecia ... mandava foto de onde eu tava, com quem eu tava, tudo para ele. ... E ele falou: Ah, você fica conversando com outros meninos, e tal e pá. Aí, eu já tava querendo sair da escola quando aconteceu isso, eu já sai. Achei super bom porque ele não estudava, aí eu falei: Agora vou ficar a tarde inteira ... tarde inteira com ele agora. (Melissa)

[Then I stopped studying because of him, right?! ... everything I did there, the girls I knew ... I sent him pictures of where I was, who I was with, everything to him ... And he said: 'Oh, you keep talking to other boys, and all'. Then, as I already wanted to leave school, when this happened, I left. I thought it was super good because he didn't study, so I said: 'Now I'm going to stay the whole afternoon' ... the whole afternoon with him now. (Melissa)]

In Míriam's case, family conflicts and domestic violence contributed to her dropping out of school.

Minha mãe ficava correndo demais atrás de mim pra eu ir pra escola, só que eu não ia. Eu parei com 12. Quando fumava, foi no sexto ano. ... Ah, eu voltei, mas ia 2 dias, 3 dias, e não ia mais. Aí em um outro ano eu ia 4 dias, 5 ... faltava 10, ia um dia e não ia mais. ... Quando eu via minha mãe apanhando daquele homem, aquela bagunça lá na minha casa, eu pegava e desistia, num sei.

[My mother kept forcing me too much to go to school, but I didn't go. I stopped at 12. When I smoked, it was in the sixth grade. Oh, I went back, but I went 2 days, 3 days, and I didn't go anymore. Then in another year I went 4 days, 5 ... then missed 10, I would go 1 day and never again. When I saw my mother being beaten by that man, that mess at my house, I would just give up, I don't know.]

Five girls mentioned speech learning difficulties and a history of repeating school years. Kênia dropped out of school at age 9. She reported that she attended infrequently, had learning difficulties, repeated the school grade few times, dropped out for a year, and was involved in conflict with her peers:

“Todas as vezes eu faltava um pouco de aula, ia na casa das minhas amigas, e ... um dia eu briguei na escola, bati numa menina lá na escola e eu fui suspensa.” [Every time I missed a little class, I went to my friends' house, and ... one day I had a fight at school, I hit a girl and I was suspended.] The lack of family support was also evident in her words:

Aí eu pedi para minha mãe me ajudar a fazer o dever da escola, ela falava que tá, pera aí, ... e ela não me ajudava, e eu não sabia quase nada, eu tinha que ir pros vizinhos, pros vizinho me ensinar a fazer o para, fazer a tarefa. Até hoje eu tenho dificuldade um pouco nas coisas.

[Then I asked my mother to help me with my school homework, she said 'OK, wait a minute,' ... and she didn't help me, and I knew almost nothing. I had to ask the neighbors, for the neighbors to teach me to do the task. Even today I have a little difficulty with things.]

There were also reports of conflicting relationships in the daily school environment. Jéssica exhibited violent behavior at home and in her living environments and reproduced this behavior at school.

Ah, aprontava, brigava demais, Nossa Senhora! Batia nos outros pra copiar as coisas para mim na escola. Teve uma vez, que eu botei fogo na cantina, quase que pega fogo na escola inteira. Aí eu fui expulsa. Aí, quando eu fui expulsa, eu enforquei a diretora. Ela foi falar um negócio comigo lá, eu era sem juízo nenhum. Era descabeçada da vida, tava nem aí com nada não. Ela foi falar um negocio comigo lá, eu comecei enforcar ela, cuspir na cara dela.

[Oh, I was a troublemaker, I fought too much, my goodness! I beat others to copy things for me at school. There was one time, when I set fire to the cafeteria, and the whole school almost caught fire. Then, I was expelled. Then, when I was expelled, I choked the principal. She came to talk to me about something, I was

clueless. I was out of my mind; I didn't care about anything. She wanted to talk to me about something, and I started choking her and spat on her face.]

Some of the young girls also experienced difficulties in interpersonal relationships and repeatedly resorted to aggression:

Não aguento escola não. ... Já joguei vôlei, handebol, futebol ... só que eu sou uma menina muito nervosa, Nossa Senhora! Se eu levar uma pancada, dá briga na hora! Se eu tomar uma bicuda na canela, eu já voo na pessoa na hora. ... Você tem que ter paciência pra tudo, e eu não tenho. E te assumo que não tenho paciência não, então é melhor ficar sozinha sabe? Sem fazer nada, é melhor, sabe? (Bárbara)

[I can't stand school ... I've played volleyball, handball, soccer ... but I'm a very hot-headed girl, my goodness! If I get hit, there's a fight right away! If I take a kickoff on the shin, I'll tackle the person right away ... You have to be patient with everything, and I don't have patience. As I know that I don't have the patience, it's better to be alone, you know? Doing nothing is better, you know? (Bárbara)]

E aquela escola só tinha tipo menina ... como se diz ... inferior, feia, tipo feia, mais feia que eu. E tinha uma menina lá ... que era popular na escola, deixou de ser popular, porque eu me tornei popular na escola. Não querendo ser, eu me tornei que todos os meninos viam para cima de mim mesmo sabendo que eu tava namorando. ... Foi na onde que essa menina me ameaçou, ... me empurrou. ... Derrubou, o celular dele caiu no chão, me ameaçou. Até que ela veio para cima de mim ... e fui lá para sala da diretora. Nisso chamou a polícia, um bafafá danado A menina me ameaçou na frente do policial falou que não ia dar nada para ela, que ela não ia ir presa, que já tinha passagem pela polícia, enfim. E a diretora ligou pra minha mãe e falou 'olha, você tem que fazer um boletim de ocorrência contra essa menina' e tal. Minha mãe não fez o boletim de ocorrência e eu tive que sair da escola por causa que minha mãe não queria me deixar lá com essa menina que tinha acabado de me ameaçar. (Melissa)

[And that school only had girls ... how do you say ... inferior girls, ugly, like uglier than me. And there was a girl there ... who was popular at school. She stopped being popular, because I became popular at school. Although I didn't want to, I became what all the boys looked up to, although they knew I was dating. That's when this girl threatened me, ... pushed me. ... She dropped it; her cell phone fell to the floor; she threatened me. One day she came right up to me ... and I went to the principal's office. The principal then called the police, there was a hell of a fuss. The girl threatened me in front of the police and said that he wasn't going to do anything to her, that she wasn't going to be arrested, that she already had a police file anyway. And the principal called my mother and said 'Look, you have to file a police report against this girl.' My mother didn't file the police report, and I had to leave school because my mother didn't want to leave me there with this girl who had just threatened me. (Melissa)]

In Melissa's case, there was an apparent manifestation of a feeling of superiority in relation to her peers, which can be understood as an expression of visibility and

reaffirmation. This made it impossible for her to stay at school. Her behavior generated resentment among her classmates and led to her being threatened by another girl at school and eventually being transferred.

### **Child labor, sexual exploitation, and underemployment**

The girls interviewed presented their experiences of child labor, sexual exploitation, and underemployment, which contravenes the legislation in effect in the country. When analyzing the work and support experiences of these girls, only two of them did not report any work experience. The others worked informally, and only three started this experience after the age of 16. Half of the interviewees started child labor between the ages of 7 and 12.

Housework was reported in all interviews as being a responsibility they were expected to fulfill. Many took on significant responsibilities, such as cooking, taking care of domestic activities, and caring for younger siblings, including changing diapers, bathing, and feeding. In general, this happened on a full-time daily basis without the presence of an adult, constituting one of the worst forms of child labor as per Brazilian legislation, which is prohibited for children under 18 years as it represents a risk to the health of children. Performing these tasks in the family environment was so intrinsic to the participants who were from a low-income and patriarchal context that they did not draw attention to it. In fact, housework was often identified as leisure activities by the girls. However, in some cases, an overload of these tasks was observed.

After experiencing life on the streets with her mother, Jéssica reported how her daily life was at 12 years old when her mother got a job as a manicurist. She had to take care of her brother and undertake domestic duties while her mother worked.

Aí eu acordava, fazia o mamá pra ele, aí ficava um tempinho deitada com ele, depois nos já acordava assistindo desenho, depois eu levantava, começava arrumar a casa, fazia almoço para nos dois. Aí depois do almoço, eu ia dava banho nele, tomava banho também. (Jéssica)

[I would wake up and feed him; then I would lie down with him for a little while. Then we would wake up and watch cartoons; after that, I would start cleaning the house and make lunch for both of us. After lunch, I would bathe him and take a bath myself. (Jéssica)]

Jéssica reported the precarious conditions of her home; however, she also expressed satisfaction over having escaped life on the streets.

Era muito humilde, tipo assim, nós tinha nem cama, que era só um, lá dentro do nosso quarto era só um colchão de casal. Aí tinha um colchão de casal, um de solteiro no canto, que eu dormia no de solteiro e minha mãe no de casal com o Davi. E tinha um raque assim, com uma TV petítinha, mas pegava os canal tudo, e nós tinha que ficar colocando os Bombril lá ainda, [risos] lá na antena. Uma televisão pequenininha, mas tipo assim, tudo muito bem arrumadinho, sabe?! A cozinha tinha as coisas lá bonitinha, tinha um armário, fogão lá bonitinho,

geladeira, mas tipo assim, casa muito humilde. ... Sala num tinha nada de móveis era, então tipo assim, uma infância muito pobre, mas muito rica de alegria sabe?!

[It was very humble, like, we didn't even have a bed. There was only a double mattress, on which my mother slept with David, and a single mattress in the corner, on which I slept. And there was a rack like that, with a tiny TV, but it got all the channels; we had to keep putting steel wool there, [laughs] on the antenna. It was a tiny television, but like, everything very tidy, you know?! The kitchen had things there, there was a cupboard, a stove, a fridge, but like, a very humble house. ... The living room didn't have any furniture; it was, like, a very poor childhood, but very rich in joy, you know?!]

Similarly, Tamires reported, without complaints, the child labor to which she and her older sister were subjected. She reported that she had worked informally as a nanny and a cleaning lady. She believed that working from an early age, although they were still children, was what society expected of them. Thus, she spoke of her older sister:

E eu fiquei bastante feliz, num tem?! Porque eu acho que, se humm, pra nossa sociedade, sociedade né, e bom, acho que e bom. Eu fiquei bastante alegre porque com 7 anos ela cuidava de nós.

[And I was quite happy, isn't it?! I think, if hmm, if our society thinks it is good, then I think it's good. I was very happy because at 7 years old, she took care of us.]

Flávia cleaned the house of drug dealers in exchange for drugs, as she was a user and addict of crack-cocaine and other drugs. Maria, at the age of 12, moved in with her 25-year-old partner and started cleaning other people's homes.

Depois que eu tô casada, nós sempre fez isso. Meu marido vai trabalhar, eu fico em casa quando não vou trabalhar, cuido da casa, depois que eu trabalho. ... Desde quando eu conheci ele. Eu comecei a aprender a cozinhar, a trabalhar. Tudo que eu aprendi foi depois que eu conheci ele. Aprender a cozinhar, a trabalhar, entendeu?

[After I got married, I've always done that. My husband goes to work. I stay at home when I don't go to work and take care of the house after I return from work. ... After I met him, I learned to cook and work. I learned everything after I met him. Learning to cook, to work, you know?]

She reported that she had worked as a cleaning lady and a nanny, given private lessons to children, and worked as a coffee picker with her partner. From her perspective, this was something positive as it was a counterpoint to drug abuse, sexual exploitation, and the condition of life she had led. In her view, her life had improved, although she was a victim of domestic violence: "I thank him a lot, you know?"

In addition to the working conditions already described, it is worth mentioning that one of the young women, Ester, had been living for 3 years in a slave labor condition where she took care of the house and the three young daughters of a couple. However, she was not paid for her work, with the excuse that she could use the money for drugs. Therefore, she was instead rewarded with some clothes. Ester also believed that when

employers took her to “hang out” or travel with them, it was not work but a form of payment, although the children were under her care all the time. She worked full-time daily and went home only to sleep. The beginning of this work coincided with the period she dropped out of school. Ester also reported that she did not eat in the presence of the family for whom she worked, and that she was ashamed of them. If a person is excluded from the minimum conditions of dignity, then this represents slave labor, even if they technically maintain their freedom. The couple moved abroad and planned to take her to live with them, away from her family and friends, without any salary or educational prospects.

Miriam, who lived in a rural area, stated that she wanted to work but that her region is marked by a scarcity of work opportunities for girls. She had only limited work experience as a cleaning lady and was happy when she got it. However, after being raped twice in other circumstances and suffering sexual violence at work from the owner of the house, who wanted to abuse her in exchange for money, she quit the job and became jobless again.

Esse homem era mais velho, ele trabalhava, né ... ele era dono de borracharia. Só que depois ele foi começando a dar em cima de mim, querendo pegar, pegar na minha bunda, quando eu tava trabalhando lá, sabe?! Querendo me dar dinheiro pra mim ficar com ele.

[This man was older, he worked, you know ... he owned a tire shop. But then he started hitting me and wanted to grab my ass when I was working there, you know?! He wanted to give me money to make out with him.]

Miriam expressed satisfaction regarding the time she was working and displeasure over the situation that made her become unemployed and without prospects.

Aí eu tava até gostando, sabe?! Porque eu tava mudando, acordando cedo, eu tava até gostando mais de mim, acordando cedo pra trabalhar, dormia cedo, aí eu tava até gostando, tava mudando, né?! Com meu servicinho, comprando a roupinha que eu queria, com o dinheiro do meu serviço ... aí, depois começou pegar em mim, vir para cima de mim, eu fui e desisti, e saí. ... Eu tava toda feliz lá trabalhando ... tava tão bom se cê visse! Ele começou a me assediar e eu saí. ... E depois foi falar pro meu irmão lá, que era puta, só porque eu não quis ficar com ele. Porque será que ele falou isso? Que eu era puta? Só porque eu não quis ficar com ele?

[I was even enjoying it, you know?! I was even liking myself more, waking up early for work, sleeping early, then I was even enjoying it, I was changing, right?! I could buy the clothes I wanted, with the money from my service ... then, later, he started to pick on me, come at me, I just gave up, and left. ... I was all happy working there ... it would be so good if you saw it! He started harassing me, and I left. ... And then he went to tell my brother that I was a bitch, just because I didn't want to make out with him. Why did he say that? That I was a whore? Just because I didn't want to make out with him?]

Contrary to the high statistical rates of drug trafficking in the Brazilian juvenile justice system (Ministério da Mulher, da Família e dos Direitos Humanos, 2019; CNJ, 2015),

only two girls reported working as drug traffickers. Jéssica was exposed to drug trafficking in her family environment, as her mother sold drugs. Although she did not use drugs, she became romantically involved with the drug dealer for whom her mother worked and went to live with him at the age of 15. The couple's only livelihood was drug trafficking; however, her companion died in an exchange of gunfire with the police while she was incarcerated.

### **Leisure opportunities in the girls' daily lives**

In general, the participants reported limited leisure experiences in their daily lives. They often identified moments linked to home care, such as tidying the house, watching TV, and navigating social media as restricted leisure. All the reported leisure occupations were limited to the domestic and family environment:

Ah, eu gostava de dançar, eu gosto muito de fazer faxina, eu gosto de lavar roupa, eu sei passar, cozinhar, gosto muito de ajudar minha mãe. (Tamires)

[Oh, I liked to dance, I really like cleaning, I like washing clothes, I know how to iron, cook. I really like helping my mother. (Tamires)]

Ah ... ler, mexer no telefone, nas redes sociais, né, geralmente, e ... eu tenho um ... não sei como dizer, eu tenho uma mania, onde eu vejo poeirinha eu tenho que tá ali limpando, então gostava sempre deixar minhas coisas no lugar, então, a maioria do meu tempo vivia era arrumando minha casa, mexendo no celular e lendo livro, só, eu adoro ler. (Kristiana)

[Oh ... reading, using the phone, spending time on social networks, you know, generally, and ... I have a ... I don't know how to say it, I have a habit, when I see dust, I just have to clean it, so most of my time was spent tidying my house, using my cell phone, and reading books, I just love to read. (Kristiana)]

Cultural and sports activities in most cases (9) were experienced exclusively in the school environment. Therefore, this type of experience ceased in their daily lives when this bond was broken.

Interviewer: E você já participou de alguma oficina, algum projeto de esporte ou lazer?

Maria: Não, não ... . Só na escola, só lá mesmo que a gente fazia.

Interviewer: Fora da escola não?

Maria: Não.

[Interviewer: And have you ever participated in any workshops, sports, or leisure projects?

Maria: No, no ... . Only at school, only there that we used to do it.

Interviewer: Not out of school?

Maria: No.]

Only four of the girls reported sports activities outside the school context; however, only in one of these cases was it offered by a public program. Cultural activities were even rarer in the girls' discourse: only one mentioned that she had visited the cinema and one mentioned attending a dance workshop. They drew attention to the lack of public policies in the area of sports, culture, and leisure aimed at the young population, especially girls. The fact that all the girls lived in cities near the countryside of the state and some in the rural area demonstrates that there is a greater scarcity of leisure opportunities in these regions.

In one of the interviews, when asked about a project or program in this area, the girl mentioned the Social Assistance Reference Center (CRAS), but reported as follows:

Tinha esse trem não, de oficina não. Nem foi lá que eles iam dar curso pra gente, eles só iam lá pra falar pra gente ir pra escola, só isso. Só pra encher o saco da gente. (Míriam)

[There wasn't such a thing, no workshop. They weren't even going to teach us there, they just went there to tell us to go to school, that's all. Just to get on our nerves. (Míriam)]

Some leisure practices linked to nature, which are more common in cities near the countryside, were mentioned, such as visiting waterfalls and riding a horse. This demonstrates the scarcity of leisure opportunities offered to the young population of these regions, especially girls.

## **Discussion**

The girls reported experiences that refer to school, work, and leisure pursuits when narrating their occupations prior to their imprisonment. The intersectionality perspective enabled a greater understanding of social inequalities arising from gender, class, and race, which led to restrictive and violent experiences for the female population. These inequalities are clearly expressed in the girls' experiences of early school dropout, child labor, and a lack of leisure opportunities.

The girls in this study were part of a population that intensely experiences the inequities of the Brazilian educational system. Although the state offers access to education, this access is not equitable, especially when considering quality and inclusivity (Arruda, 2020). The reports corroborate the data provided by SUASE, collected between 2015 and 2019, and the data provided in national studies regarding the high rate of early dropout of poor young Brazilians (Arruda, 2020; Ministério da Mulher, da Família e dos Direitos Humanos, 2019; CNJ, 2015; Rivera & Pino, 2020; Silva, 2020), as nine of the girls had dropped out of school prior to their imprisonment.

Several factors can have an impact on the participation of young people in school life. Filho and Araújo (2017) found that the process of dropping out is complex and can result from a combination of events. Some of these causes may include early entry into the job market, difficulties with school material, alcoholism, long distances to school, lack of family support, and a quality of education that is segregating and selective (Filho & Araújo, 2017). The reports of young girls indicate that their connection to school can

be fragile and easily broken due to reasons such as accommodating a boyfriend's wishes, conflicts with classmates, and maintaining friendships. Other aspects that contributed to decreased interest and poor prospects in academics included drug use, and insufficient parental involvement in and supervision of education. According to Núñez (2019), it is imperative to challenge the notion that those with limited education are solely responsible for their academic failure. Instead, Núñez asserted that these individuals are victims of the economic logic perpetuated by a weak welfare state, which exacerbates social inequality and leads to exclusion both within and outside of educational environments.

The reports of the girls also highlight the fact that their school experience was characterized by disruptive and disinterested behavior, even to the extent that police officers were involved to mediate the relationship between the girls and the school. There is no mention in their narratives of positive educational experiences or fond memories. Schools fail to offer these young individuals an "intellectual adventure" (Charlot, 2002, p. 24) that stimulates imagination, self-worth, physical and aesthetic development, or dreams.

They attributed their early withdrawal from school to a meritocratic, individualistic view linked to their microsocial contexts and reproduced society's tendency to blame the most vulnerable population for their conditions. However, this view lacks a critical perception related to the inequalities and violations of rights to which they are exposed. The naturalization of individualistic and meritocratic ethics obscures the reasons for the high school dropout rate among girls from the lower classes and those who are in the juvenile detention centers (Pereira et al., 2015).

Ten of the girls reported having already worked, and half of them had already been victims of sexual exploitation. All of them mention housework as a trivial occupation, without linking it to work experience itself. According to the current legislation in Brazil, engaging in any type of work, except as an apprentice (from the age of 14), before the age of 16 is prohibited. Any occupation undertaken for sustenance performed by people under the age of 16, regardless of whether it is paid, is legally considered child labor. The reports reveal the persistent and cruel problem of child labor in the country, particularly among lower-class girls. One of the reports illustrates how young women view domestic work and caring for children as acceptable and expected by society. It is worth noting that in Brazil there is an explicit defense of common sense, which contradicts all laws protecting children and adolescents, expressed in the following phrase "it is better to work than to steal." As of 2019, there were still 1.8 million children and young people in this condition, most of them Brown and Black (IBGE, 2020).

Many girls had also performed domestic work as a cleaning lady in someone else's house. As of 2019, thousands of children and young girls work as informal domestic servants (IBGE, 2020). This is one of the most common forms of child labor in Brazil and is difficult to eradicate, as it happens inside third parties' homes without any control system, given that this is also socially naturalized/accepted work for girls. According to Novais et al. (2016), the exploitation of child labor is a common practice in Brazil and the interviews clearly demonstrate the presence of these experiences in the daily lives of

these girls. Among the various social factors for these practices, inequality manifests as a structural cause for this violation of basic rights.

Domestic child labor, either in others' homes or in the family environment, was present in the history of all the girls in this study; its pervasiveness has led to it being considered one of the worst manifestations of child labor. Children and adolescents who perform domestic chores conduct their work functions daily in a private environment without any control system, and the process is often naturalized as a contribution to their adult education when it comes to women. This group is probably the most vulnerable and exploited, as well as the most difficult to protect (Novais et al., 2016).

The reports evidenced the condition of sexual exploitation to which at least half of the interviewees were subjected. Often related to the trajectory of life on the streets, as mentioned in the stories of five of the young girls, they may be exposed to social risks and vulnerability. However, for these girls, it seemed to be the only possible means of meeting their basic financial needs and gaining access to consumer goods. Kiepek et al. (2019) presented some occupations labeled as deviant, such as drug trafficking and sex work, which are made invisible and disregarded by most societies and scientific studies. However, millions of women and girls around the world are sex workers. Half of the interviewees reported having experienced sexual exploitation, which is regarded as one of the worst forms of child labor according to Decree No. 6,481/2008, which prohibits the sexual exploitation of minors under 18 (Brasil, 2008). Pessoa (2015) asserted that, despite sexual exploitation and drug trafficking being categorized in the List of the Worst Forms of Child Labor - TIP List, the state's response to young people's involvement in these occupations, in most cases, is punishment. However, a productive response would be to address the underlying issues and protect young people.

The dimension of leisure was highlighted in the girls' narratives, demonstrating the absence of these experiences in the lives of young women. Brazil's Federal Constitution of 1988 recognizes leisure as a right. However, little progress has been made in expanding access to this right, especially for more vulnerable populations, as demonstrated in this study. Leisure is a modern phenomenon, resulting from the tensions between capital and work, which materializes as a time and space for playful experiences, a place for the organization of culture, permeating hegemonic relationships (Mascarenhas, 2003).

Debates supported by cultural studies analyze leisure as a gender-generating experience, in which representations of femininity and masculinity are produced and reproduced (Goellner et al., 2010). Inequality of opportunity caused by gender is rarely addressed in discussions regarding public policies aimed at sport and leisure in Brazil. Bonalume (2020) emphasized that, for women, leisure is often restricted by the social roles assigned to them: caring for others, lack of time for self-care, the overload of assumed responsibilities, and difficulty in recognizing leisure as a right. Furthermore, the nature of the public space designed by a masculine and exclusionary logic does not provide women a safe space, besides not considering their desires and interests. Several of these conditions that restrict the experience of leisure, linked to the social roles assigned to women, were evidenced in the girls' narratives. They often identified domestic and care

occupations, the 'naturalized' and commonplace functions that comprise the daily lives of lower-class girls, as leisure.

Leisure pursuits should be configured as one of the "central occupations in the lives of the young women participating in this study, because in these they live together, meet friends, offer mutual support, and build affective relationships" (Tolvett & Dreyer, 2014, p. 17).<sup>1</sup> According to Pais (1990), "it is in the field of leisure that youth cultures acquire greater visibility and expression" (p. 591).<sup>1</sup> However, in the daily lives of the interviewees, the collective and socializing experience of leisure was insignificant, which demonstrates that this right is far from being guaranteed.

The girls' narratives illustrate material, symbolic, and relational restrictions expressed in the limited experiences of leisure. In their narratives, they denounce how the issues of gender and class define the few opportunities for leisure. They reported limited opportunities for public leisure spaces in their life contexts, which were identified almost exclusively in the school environment. Thus, for dropouts like them, leisure opportunities have become inaccessible.

## **Implications**

The results of this study suggest theoretical and practical implications, by expanding the scope of analysis of occupations under the lens of exploitation and social oppression that take away the daily lives of young incarcerated women. This study has the potential to broaden the understanding of the occupational experiences of vulnerable groups, in the sense of providing guidance on new positions and methodologies for interventions with this population. The results draw attention to the complexity of the phenomena involved in criminality, especially when it comes to young girls, shifting the focus from the offending individual to the multiple exploitations and oppressions that interfere with this social problem. Specifically for occupational science, the points raised are in line with the understanding of human occupation from its social, economic, cultural, political conditions, etc., a perspective that has gained momentum in the field (Magalhães, 2013). Additionally, a study on the reality of young Brazilian women from marginalized social strata can contribute to the understanding that occupational experiences are directly affected by the regional, cultural, political, economic, and historical characteristics of each country, which reiterates the need for occupational science to produce knowledge that addresses the diversity and plurality of local realities (Magalhães et al., 2019).

In relation to future research, broader investigation of the social relationships of these young people is needed, considering the perceptions of family members, teachers, schoolmates, and friends, to build understanding of the experiences of these young people from a relational perspective. Another interesting study would be about the contributions of professionals who deal directly with young people in a situation of deprivation of liberty, with emphasis on their occupational experiences, to better understand the concepts and methods that guide the practices of these professionals with this population. Finally, the study raises the issue of infractions of the law as an occupation present in the daily lives of these young people. A broader investigation into

the relationship between occupation and infractions immersed in the context of inequalities and discrimination identified in the history of these young women would be appropriate.

### **Strengths and limitations**

The use of an oral history method in the design of the research enabled the active participation of girls in conveying the narrative of their life trajectories. Thus, young, socially invisible girls received the opportunity to narrate their paths marked by social inequalities from childhood to youth. Another relevant aspect of the research is the theoretical contribution to the theme, given the few existing studies, especially in the area of occupational science, as it was guided by an intersectional reading to understand the occupations of vulnerable groups. The study's main limitation was its failure to include other key players mentioned in the interviews with the girls, such as family members and school personnel, who played a significant role in the girls' recent history. From a relational viewpoint, interviews with these actors would broaden the understanding of the "other" and bring new interactive elements to analysis of the girls' occupational experiences reported in the study.

### **Conclusions**

The impact of gender and social class issues on the daily experiences and occupations of girls who had entered the juvenile detention system in the state of Minas Gerais demonstrated the oppressions and social inequalities to which they had been exposed since childhood. The right of a child to spend their childhood being protected and cared for was practically absent in the lives of these girls, who had to assume responsibilities for their and their families' lives (Assis & Constantino, 2001).

Their stories are strongly marked by violations of their rights in various aspects of their daily occupation through the scarcity of resources, the absence of protection, difficulty in accessing and staying in school, exploitative working conditions, sexual violence, and general vulnerability. Although issues related to race were not explicit in the girls' narratives, it is possible that they exist in a veiled way in the nuances of their daily lives. Often subjects who face discrimination are not aware of their condition or cannot identify it, as they live in a racist society and have become accustomed to racialized beliefs and values (Akotirene & Lopes, 2020; Crenshaw, 2002; Ribeiro, 2016; Rosa, 2018). The discussion also demonstrated the impact of sexual and domestic violence in the daily lives of these girls, especially in the case of girls who lived in smaller cities in the interior of the state of Minas Gerais. Evidently, Brazil's legislation is insufficient to protect the young female population, especially by the naturalization of this violence in the private sphere.

Examining the occupations held by young women prior to their arrest provides a valuable perspective on how class and gender roles contribute to violence and social injustice in everyday life, shaping experiences and relationships from childhood on. This insight is often overlooked due to the criminal justice system's singular focus on

their role as perpetrators and society's tendency to legitimize this narrow view. A retrospective study of the life trajectory of these girls based on their occupations through an expanded intersectional lens reveals the interplay of gender and social class in their occupational experiences. It also sheds light on the potential of analyzing occupations to better understand class inequalities and criminality. Finally, the potential of intersectional reading to understand the effects of social inequalities in the daily occupations of socially vulnerable populations was highlighted. The concept of occupation from a social perspective enhances the understanding of the realities experienced by this population and enables a critical and activist positioning in the area facing occupational inequities.

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