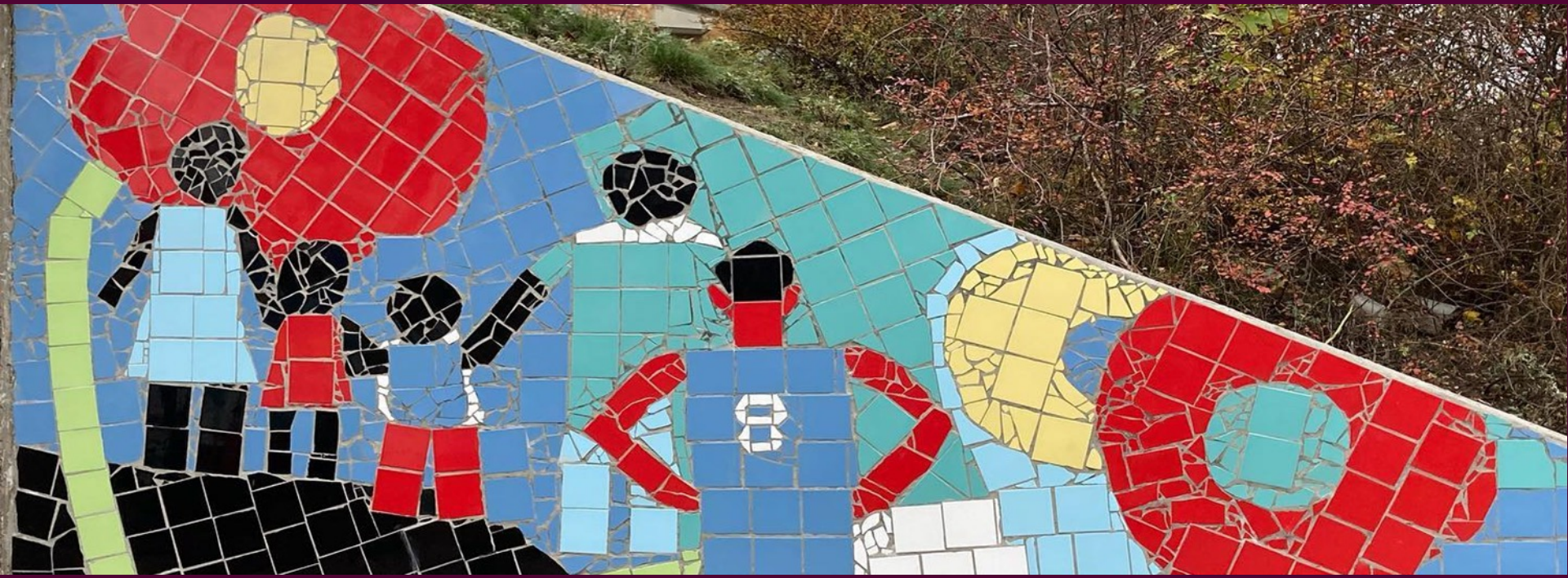


Revisiting the potential of occupation for personal and social transformation



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Aim

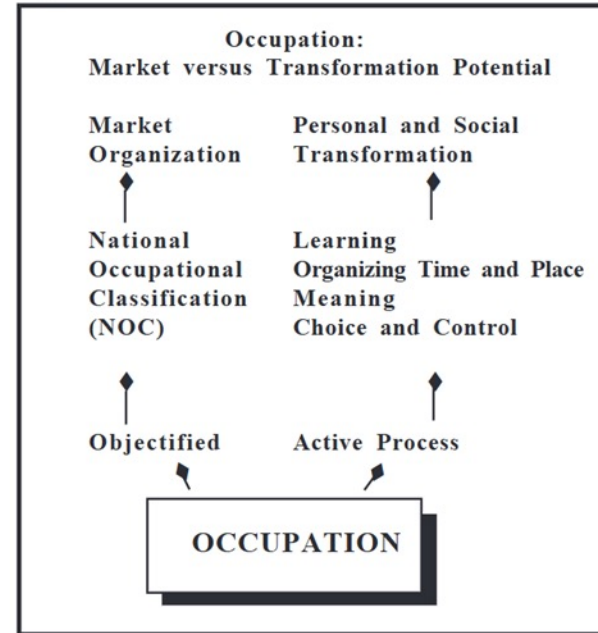
This work revisits Townsend (1997) to provide a historical perspective on key tensions and advancements and discusses three questions:

- (1) How is *personal* transformation connected to *social* transformation?
- (2) How can social transformation through occupation be *captured or measured*?
- (3) Is social transformation through occupation a *utopian ideal*?



Introduction: A historical perspective

- Townsend (1997) challenged reductionist views of occupation and emphasized its transformative potential.
- Critical turn in occupational science. Occupation as situated (e.g., Angell, 2014; Kiepek, Phelan, & Magalhães, 2014).
- Latin American scholars resisted reducing political–ethical issues to technical matters (e.g., Galheigo, 2011, 2016).



Townsend, E. (1997). Occupation: Potential for personal and social transformation. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 4(1), 18–26.

Tensions & developments

- Ongoing critiques:
 - Overemphasis on the individual obscuring structural influences (Dickie, Cutchin, & Humphry, 2006; Laliberte Rudman, 2013; Kantartzis & Molineux, 2011).
 - Assumptions of autonomous agency ignore constraints shaped by inequality (Galvaan, 2015; Peters & Galvaan, 2020; Rudman, 2010).
 - Transformative aspirations and practice shaped by biomedical roots (Farias, Laliberte Rudman, & Magalhães, 2016; Frank & Muriithi, 2015; Whiteford & Townsend, 2011).



Tensions & developments

- Ongoing critiques:
 - Professionalization reinforced reductionist paradigms (Frank, 1992; Townsend & Polatajko, 2007; Whiteford, 2000; Wilding, 2011).
 - Neoliberalism and globalization intensify inequalities (Farias & Laliberte Rudman, 2019; van Bruggen et al., 2020; Laliberte Rudman, 2021).



Discussion

Based on Townsend (1997) and key tensions, we present three new aspects/questions to consider:

- (1) How is *personal* transformation connected to *social* transformation?
- (2) How can social transformation through occupation be *captured or measured*?
- (3) Is social transformation through occupation a *utopian ideal*?

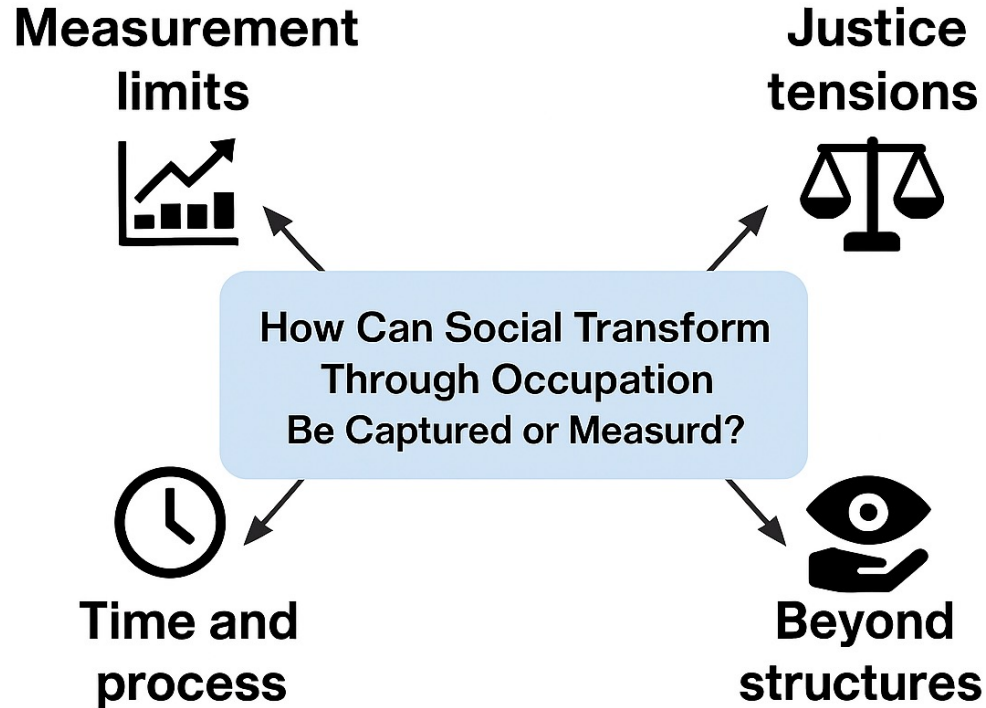


1. How is Personal Transformation Connected to Social Transformation?

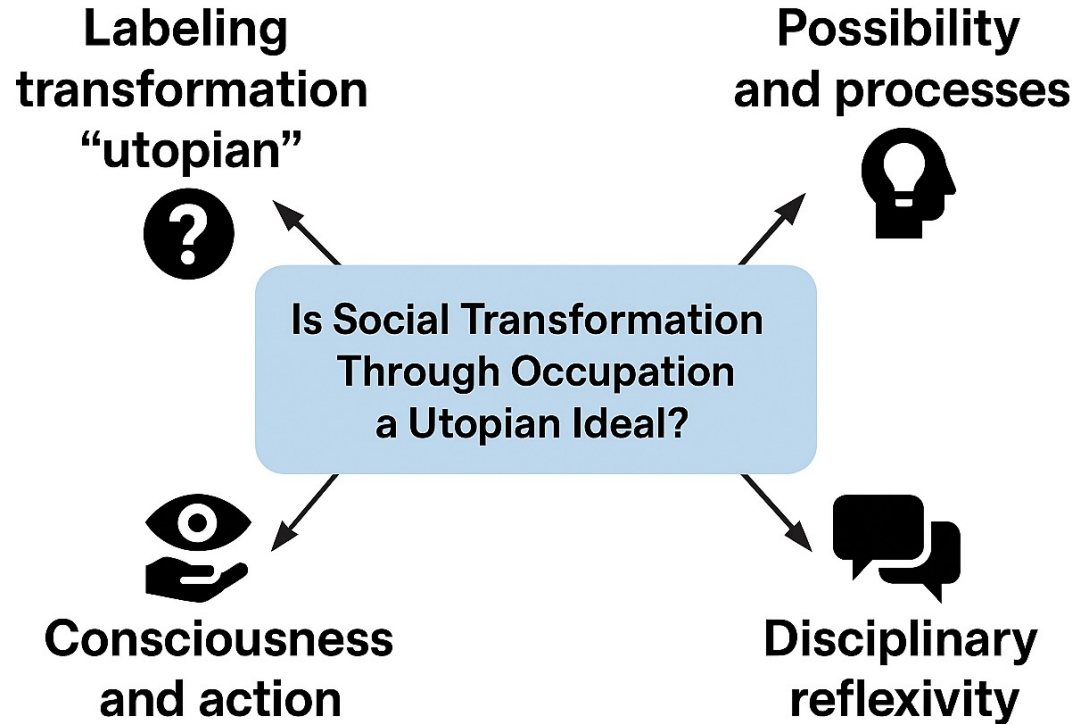
- Social transformation impossible without *personal transformation*
- (Un)knowingly perpetuation of systems through occupation
- Consciousness-raising may vary among individuals
- Avoid homogenization



2. How Can Social Transformation Through Occupation Be Captured or Measured?

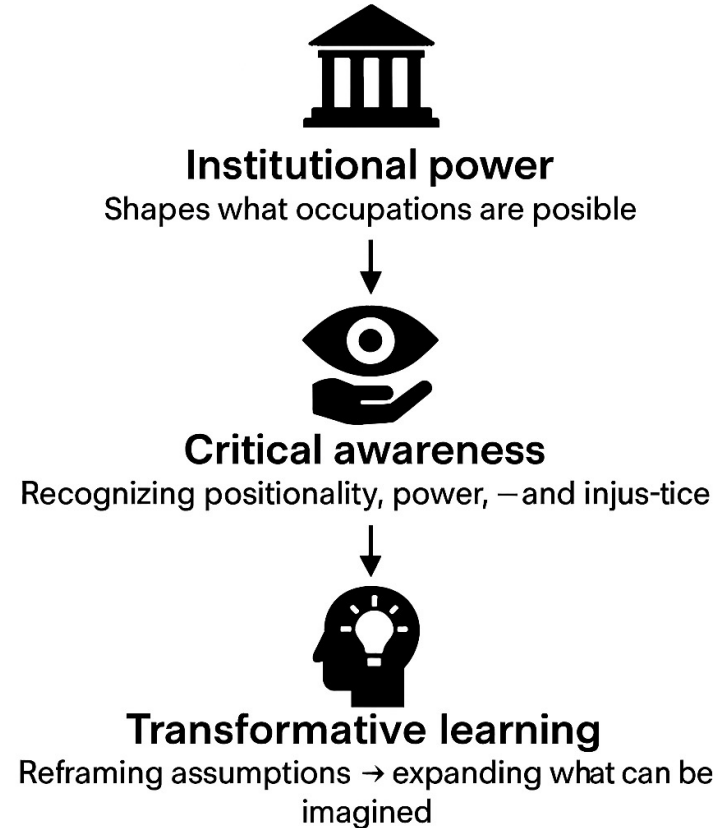


3. Is social transformation through occupation a utopian ideal?



Reflections

- Consciousness ↔ action gap
- Conditions for transformation:
 - critical awareness
 - transformative learning
 - transformative action
 - holding space for possibility
 - long-lasting partnerships





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