

‘Opportunity’ in Occupational Science: A critique

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A critical review of the OS literature

- * Literature in OS dispersed across the Journal of Occupational Science, various occupational therapy journals and books in the discipline and profession
- * Stage I: Using the search terms 'opportunity' and 'occupational opportunity' within relevant online databases
- * Stage II: Handsearching various OS and OT journals and books across the last 20 years or more

Stage II: Search Strategy

<u>Journals</u>	<u>Books</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Journal of Occupational Science 1993-2017• The American Journal of Occupational Therapy 1997-2017• The Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy 1997-2017• The Australian Occupational Therapy Journal 1997-2017• The British Journal of Occupational Therapy 1997-2017• The Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy 1997-2017• The South African Journal of Occupational Therapy 2008-2017• Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional 2010-2017• Occupational Therapy International 1997-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupational Science the evolving discipline (Zemke & Clarke, 1996)• Occupation for Occupational Therapists (Molineux, 2004)• Transformation through Occupation (Watson & Swartz, 2004)• An Occupational Perspective of Health, 1st and 2nd Edition (Wilcock, 1996; 2006)• Enabling Occupation II (Townsend & Polatajko, 2007)• Occupational Therapy. An African Perspective (Alers & Crouch, 2010)• Occupational Therapies without Borders, volume 2 (Kronenberg, Pollard & Sakellariou, 2011)• Transactional perspectives on Occupation (Cutchin & Dickie, 2013)• Occupational Science for Occupational Therapy (Pierce, 2014)• An Occupational Perspective of Health, 3rd Edition (Wilcock & Hocking,)• Occupational Therapy without Borders, 2nd Edition (Pollard & Sakellariou, 2017)

Findings: Stage I

Article	Model of Processes Transforming Occupations: Exploring Societal and Social Influences	A community panel on occupations to consider economic opportunities outside major urban centres: Occupations in Thunder Bay, Canada	Enhancing Occupational Opportunities in Communities: Politics' Third Way and the Concept of the Enabling State	The Dr Elizabeth Casson Memorial Lecture 1996. Equalising Opportunities
Author	Humphry, 2005	Shaw, Southcott & Townsend, 2009	Whiteford, 2003	Yates, 2004
Theorises the concept of 'opportunity' directly	No	No	No	No
Interpretations of proposition(s) in the paper that contribute to our understanding of 'opportunity'	<p>Opportunities are 'constructed' within environments that have particular expectations for certain groups' doing</p> <p>Individuals act as mediators of the expected opportunities to promote the development of skills</p>	<p>An opportunity is an 'opening' to engage in occupation(s)</p> <p>'Place' shares a relationship with the emergence of particular forms of opportunities</p>	<p>An <i>enabling state</i> enhances access to opportunities</p> <p>Opportunities provided through state mechanisms does not always result in their utilization</p>	<p>There is a relationship between different aspects of social identity and access to equal opportunity</p> <p>System's level aspects influence access to equal opportunity</p>

Findings: Stage I (cont.)

- * All 4 papers related access to opportunities to the context in which people find themselves
- * Papers emphasize the micro-level environment or macro context
- * Whiteford (2003) highlights the role of the state - questions about why opportunities are not taken up

Findings: Stage II

- * Rights-based discourses and occupational justice
- * Critical occupational science constructs that highlight the potentially sociopolitical nature of opportunity

Findings: Stage II

Area of knowledge	Rights-based discourses and occupational justice
Contributing authors (not an exhaustive list)	Hammell, 2008; 2014; 2016; 2017; Hammell & Iwama, 2012; Hammell & Beagan, 2017; van der Merwe, 2010; Galheigo, 2011; Bailliard, 2016; Galvin & Wilding, 2017; Bullen, 2017; Townsend & Wilcock, 2004; Durocher, Gibson & Rappolt, 2014; Stadnyk, Townsend & Wilcock, 2010; Whiteford & Townsend, 2011
A provisional synthesis of key insights	<p>Access to basic rights as opportunities</p> <p>Access to equal opportunity to participate is a necessary precursor for occupational justice.</p> <p>The capabilities approach is a useful framework that assists us to think about the basic opportunities that people need.</p>

Findings: Stage II

Area of knowledge	Critical occupational science constructs that highlight the potentially sociopolitical nature of opportunity
Contributing authors (not an exhaustive list)	Laliberte Rudman, 2010; Galvaan, 2015
A provisional synthesis of key insights	<p>Negotiating opportunities a product of social reproduction (Galvaan, 2015).</p> <p>Sociopolitical forces govern the possibilities for action (Laliberte Rudman, 2010; 2015).</p>

Opening the Dialogue: Current 'silences' in the literature

- * No clear definition of 'opportunity' or what an 'occupational opportunity' is
- * An emphasis on equal access to basic entitlements only is limiting
- * Focus on broad-level contextual factors OR micro-level interactions, but not on the synthesis between these with regard to opportunity and social reproduction

Extending the dialogue: Engaging Interdisciplinary Perspectives

- * **Could opportunity be conceptualized as a sociopolitical phenomenon?** (Alvarez, 2009)
- * **Could opportunity be conceptualized as a *process*** rather than simply a chance to participate or a basic entitlement? (Robeyns, 2005; Nussbaum, 2011)
- * **Might we consider a typology of opportunity** instead of opportunity as only *one* thing?

Conclusion

- * Need for further theorization of opportunity
- * Particular interest in opportunities as they relate to marginalized groups

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Questions for Discussion

- * How have the ideas presented in this paper initiated or shifted your thinking about opportunity?
- * What are your thoughts on any of the questions raised through engaging interdisciplinary perspectives?
 - Could opportunity be conceptualized as a sociopolitical phenomenon?
 - Could opportunity be conceptualized as a process?
 - Might we consider a typology for opportunity?
- * What other interdisciplinary perspectives might you know of that could further the dialogue we have initiated?