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Abstract

Occupational science has made tremendous strides in establishing a theoretical and empirical knowledge base grounded in the study of occupation. Yet given its origins in occupational therapy, a health profession aimed at enhancing health and well-being through engagement in meaningful and purposeful occupation, there has been sustained focus on the health-enhancing qualities of occupation. This has effectively silenced a significant realm of human experience: namely, occupations that are considered within dominant worldviews and societal groups to be unhealthy, illegal, and/or deviant. Our intent in this paper is to both explicate why attention to non-sanctioned occupations is important as a means to diversify perspectives on occupation, and point to key framing concepts, such as deviance, hegemony, and resistance, for such scholarship. We emphasize that examinations of this nature evoke critical reflection on underlying disciplinary assumptions, enactments of social power, and values and moral standpoints that inform knowledge production in occupational science, helping to diversify understandings of occupation itself.

KEYWORDS

Non-sanctioned occupations

By and large, the study of occupation has tended to focus on the positive, health-enhancing nature of occupation (Kiepek, Phelan, & Magalhães, 2014; Seijo, Farias, & Rivas-Quarneti, 2017; Stewart, Fischer, Hirji, & Davis, 2016). In turn, occupations viewed as unhealthy and aspects of occupation that pose potential for impaired health tend to be neglected in the literature, or to be positioned as in need of remediation. One potential reason for this focus may be the origins of the discipline in the health profession of occupational therapy, influenced by its underlying assumptions, values, and beliefs. This is coupled with an often-stated aim to generate knowledge that supports and enhances occupational therapy practice (Morley, Atwal, & Spiliotopoulou, 2011; Pierce Baltisberger, J., Fehringer, E., Hunter, E., Malkawi, S., & Parr, T., 2011). This focus on health-promoting occupations has also been linked to social, political, and historical factors that have shaped what occupations are seen as worthy of study (Kantartzis & Molineux, 2011). Prioritising healthy and health-promoting activities affords a limited or partial understanding of occupation and ways of doing, being, becoming, and belonging (Hammell, 2004). Our intent in this article is to explicate how a focus on healthy occupations has effectively silenced generative discussion about non-sanctioned occupations. Using concepts of deviance, hegemony, and resistance, we build a rationale for scholarship that encompasses a more inclusive understanding of human occupation.

We suggest the term "non-sanctioned occupations" to encompass occupations that, within historically and culturally bound contexts, tend to be viewed as unhealthy, illegal, immoral, abnormal, undesired, unacceptable, and/or inappropriate. Acknowledging non-sanctioned activities as occupations does not imply that all occupations should be socially accepted; rather, we propose that by expanding

scholarship to be inclusive of non-sanctioned occupations occupational science may achieve more nuanced understandings of human engagement in daily life. For instance, one need not advocate for engagement in theft as a productive occupation in order to recognise that theft may be a viable source of livelihood and a highly meaningful occupation that engenders and demands specific skills, capacities, and expertise.

The notion of non-sanctioned occupations builds on earlier work, which contends occupations may not always contribute to health and may infringe on the rights of others (Kiepek & Magalhães, 2011; Kiepek et al., 2014; Molke, Laliberte-Rudman, & Polatajko, 2004). This earlier work acknowledges that occupations may simultaneously hold health enhancing and health impairing potential. One of the key aims of critical scholarship is to challenge dualisms, given their socio-politically constructed nature, and address the tensions inherent within them so as to work toward more integrated, complex understandings (Christians, 2011). We acknowledge that the term *non-sanctioned* implies a dualism that likely fails to reflect the complexity of processes that shape social ideals, and that such a categorization is dynamic across time, social groups, and contexts. However, the term provides important contrast to what we perceive to predominate in occupational science: namely the examination of occupations that are largely socially "sanctioned" from a Western perspective (Kantartzis & Molineux, 2011; Kiepek et al., 2014). As such, studying so-called "non-sanctioned" occupations can encourage questioning the *status quo* of what is sanctioned. This has the potential to enhance understandings of power dynamics that shape engagement in all occupations, and perpetuate marginalization of particular ways of doing and particular collectives (Laliberte Rudman, 2014).

Silence and Silencing

Silencing involves discursive practices that limit, remove, or undermine the legitimacy

of another person's use of language (Thiesmeyer, 2003). It is an active and socially constructed practice "arising from and producing acts that make it easier for certain entities (individuals or groups) to speak and be heard in their preferred form while at the same time making it more difficult for others" (Thiesmeyer, 2003, p. 3). Silencing arises from social and political evaluations of acceptable and unacceptable, and "seeks to assimilate, filter and replace the unwanted discourse rather than erasing discourse altogether" (Thiesmeyer, 2003, p. 13).

Researchers and scholars are tacitly socialized to acquire "proper" ways of talking, acting, and thinking. Goffman (1959) described this as a process of "accentuating certain facts and concealing others" in order to present, or create, an "idealized impression" (p. 65). Portraying oneself as appropriate and one's research as conforming to social values reinforces one's social status, respect, and legitimacy, which, in turn, increases access to resources (e.g., research funding) and voice (e.g., positive reviews by peers enabling publication). In this way, discourses, ideas, and knowledge considered to be acceptable are disseminated and reproduced (Thiesmeyer, 2003).

Silencing and censorship of unwanted discourses occurs implicitly and explicitly through everyday speech and texts, in research arenas and educational institutions. We contend that occupational scientists have been complicit in shaping understandings of occupation by privileging research and theory that conform to dominant social values, ideology, and hegemony. To be precise, we propose that occupational science has largely neglected to explore and understand non-sanctioned occupations, to the detriment of nuanced understandings of the complexity of occupations, occupational engagement, and occupational meanings.

To inform this article, three research assistants completed a title and abstract

search of articles published between 2000-2016 in the *Journal of Occupational Science*, *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *New Zealand Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *Occupational Therapy International*, and *OTJR: Occupation, Participation, & Health* for mention of occupations that might be considered non-sanctioned. These articles informed our analysis, but it is important to note that this already constructs a limitation. There is no search term for non-sanctioned occupations; reviewers noted articles related to occupations they considered non-sanctioned, which might well be socially sanctioned in another place or time.

Understanding the dynamic categorization of sanctioned and non-sanctioned

Several social science theories are relevant to understanding processes that frame and shape occupations as acceptable or unacceptable. Below we describe four of these, including social sanctioning, hegemony, deviance, and resistance. The first three pertain to core concepts in the study of social phenomena, basic to understanding how practices may be positioned positively and negatively in any social space and time. Resistance provides one lens to think through how occupations that defy dominant expectations may not be 'failed attempts' to meet expectations, but rather active practices of transgression. Together these frameworks provide essential groundwork upon which other theoretical approaches may build, if (as we hope) occupational scientists increasingly engage in exploring non-sanctioned occupations.

 Social sanctioning.

Sanctioning is a social-political process. What is considered acceptable or unacceptable, socially sanctioned or non-sanctioned, varies by country, region, culture, religion, ethnicity, race, social class, health status, dis/ability, age, gender identity, and sexual orientation, among other factors. Notions of acceptable and unacceptable continually

change over time. Sexual activity is one such occupation where 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.

Sanctions are mechanisms of social control (Macionis & Gerber, 2018). They encourage compliance with social norms, which are expected ways of being and doing that are widely endorsed in a society or social group. Conforming with those expectations results in social approval, praise, access, success. Not conforming may be met with scorn, disapproval, avoidance, hostility, censure, isolation, or even incarceration. Responses are intended not only to reward or punish the individual, but primarily to reinforce social norms and expectations for the larger social group.

Social sanctions operate similarly at multiple levels. They may be society-wide, or function only within particular social groups, groups with distinct values, practices, beliefs and norms, possibly comprising their own sub-cultures (Macionis & Gerber, 2018). Social groups may differ in degree of formality, organization, interaction, cohesion, and self-identification, as well as size. Think, for example, of teenagers, a school student body, a grade within the school, a school team, and a clique or an informal group within the school, such as "the smoking crowd." Whereas *collectives* are aggregates, defined externally by demographics such as gender, age or geography, *social groups* have some degree of self-identification usually related to shared experiences and/or history. Social groups mobilize distinct social rules in sanctioning particular occupations. Musicians, for example, might be considered a social group with its own social rules and sub-culture (Becker, 1963).

While it might appear more straightforward to speak of occupations as legal or illegal, that demarcation is overly narrow. Indeed, whether or not an occupation is

sanctioned does not necessarily correspond to its legal status. Many occupations that are non-sanctioned are not illegal within a particular jurisdiction. For example, "begging" for money within public spaces may be socially discouraged, but often it is not outlawed. Some occupations that are illegal in specific jurisdictions are socially accepted, either within particular subcultures or social groups, or under particular conditions. Injecting illicit drugs may be illegal in some jurisdictions, yet exceptions in enforcement may be negotiated with organisations that run safe injection sites for harm reduction. Similarly, selling drugs may be less strongly enforced when it occurs outside socially desirable neighbourhoods or places with a positive public image (Woolford, 2001). As well, an occupation may be legal but non-sanctioned or illegal but sanctioned in some instances. For instance, use of prescribed anti-depressants is legal in Canada, but use of those legal drugs by members of the professions may still be highly stigmatized, or non-sanctioned (Kiepek & Beagan, 2018). On the other hand, use of medications not prescribed to ones' self is illegal, yet substances like methylphenidate and dextroamphetamine (ADHD medications commonly known as "uppers") are widely used among university students as cognitive aids to enhance study performance, a practice sanctioned within that sub-group (Enck, 2013, 2014; Finger, Silva, & Falavigna, 2013).

Degrees of social acceptance may shift when social norms change over time, and may vary for different social groups. In Western societies, the type of play engaged in by children, amount of structure, level of risk, and degree of supervision has shifted over time to one that is health-promoting and risk adverse. This is not necessarily about changes in play itself. Recent research challenges contemporary Western notions of play, noting a dissonance between what is considered healthy play and qualities of play identified by children as meaningful (Alexander, Frohlich, & Fusco, 2014). Further

complicating this, is variability regarding who is judging the occupation and who is

engaging in the occupation. For instance, it might be viewed as more acceptable for a

15-year old high school student to engage in skateboarding than a 40-year old business

person. Similarly, employment occupations of nursing, electrical work, and military

service may be less than fully endorsed socially – or sanctioned – for men, women and

transgender persons respectively (Alford & Lee, 2016; Dickerson, 2015; Riddell, 2011).

Thus, whether an occupation is socially sanctioned or non-sanctioned is fluid

and utterly dependent on context, including social relations within that context (Adler &

Aldler, 2000). The degree of response varies by the level of violation (Macionis &

Gerber, 2018). When non-sanctioned occupations simply violate customs, traditions, or

etiquette, such as use of cell phones during a social meal, they typically evoke only

expressions of disapproval. When social norms are associated with morals or values,

such as smoking in public places, violations result in more severe condemnation. When

they violate norms that are deeply encoded as taboo, morally prohibited, condemnation

may be intense. Occupations that are socially non-sanctioned and considered by a

majority or by a dominant group to be disruptive to social order or potentially harmful

to others are commonly subject to regulation and law, such as street racing in North

America.

Social sanctions, then, may be formal and highly codified, such as in law, or

much more informal, such as scorn or gossip. They may operate at the level of a society

(e.g., laws), or an institution (e.g., schools, hospitals, gyms), or within particular social

groups (e.g., a profession, a youth gang). Social sanctions may operate externally, such

as when someone is passed over for promotion because they consume alcohol in ways

considered "unprofessional" (Kiepek & Beagan, 2018), or may operate internally, such

as when someone experiences deep guilt and shame for feeding their children in ways

socially positioned as 'unhealthy' (Polzer & Power, 2016). Arguably, the most effective form of social control is the internalization of social scripts that construct some ways of being and doing as "good" and acceptable, and others as "bad" and unacceptable (Foucault, 1988). These scripts are discourses, ways of talking, thinking and acting in relation to a topic that come to define what is even thinkable in that arena (Foucault, (1980). They regulate conduct through establishing idealized standards defining "good" behavior, which become internalized as a moral compass by which people assess ourselves and each other. In contemporary Western societies, force and punishment are seldom needed to govern a populace, as discourses addressing occupational possibilities become internalized and guide everyday behaviour (Laliberte (Rudman, 2010). To return to the notion of play, above, parents who allow their children to play unsupervised or without a helmet, may – in a discourse of risk-aversive parenting – judge themselves and be judged by others as "bad parents."

Hegemony.

The sanctioning and non-sanctioning of occupations suggests a certain consensus regarding what is moral and "good" or dangerous and "bad." Such understandings are advanced and circulated through ideas. Ideology generally refers to the body of ideas that dominates in a society or social group at any time, and is understood to function in particular ways (Eagleton, 1991). *Hegemony* is a way of thinking about how ideology may be employed by a dominant group to gain the consent of those under its dominance.

The most influential theorist of hegemony, Antonio Gramsci (1971), argued that in a capitalist system the state and ruling class use existing social institutions (education, media, religion) to advance an ideology that justifies the social, political and economic *status quo* as natural, inevitable, and of benefit to all. The worldview of the

dominant class is normalized, inducing subordinated social groups to believe in it as common sense, the only way of thinking. Violence, force, economic pressure and coercion are not necessary to control people. In many countries, for example, governments whose agendas are contrary to the interests of lower socioeconomic groups are elected by those very voters, who have adopted a hegemonic worldview. In Western capitalist countries, the notion that people in need of daily care (infants, people with disabilities, elders) are the sole responsibility of individual households rather than neighbourhoods or communities enjoys hegemonic status. Coupled with an ideology that women are 'natural' nurturers, it results in an obstinately gendered division of labour, Similarly, in many countries, hegemonic ideologies construct racialized or ethnic minority groups as 'good at' and 'preferring' specific types of employment, particularly low-paid, manual work (Wilson, 2016).

At the same time, hegemonic power is never complete; counter-hegemonic struggles are continually mounted by groups attempting to redefine and rethink social rules and norms. Those ideas are generated by "organic intellectuals" from subordinated groups, as well as activists, artists, and other cultural workers (Freire, 1970/2007; Gramsci, 1971). Dominant groups in turn strive to absorb counter-hegemonic ideas into their worldview. Consider, for example, women in North America taking up cigarette smoking in the 1920s, defying sexist notions of the occupation as immoral and dirty for women. They were part of a first-wave feminist movement for equality. Before long cigarettes were marketed to women as glamourous and elegant femininity, sold in new "feminine" shapes and colors, and hailed as a way to control body weight (Warsh & Tinkler, 2007). A similar move happened in the 1960s with Virginia Slims cigarette ads claiming, "You've come a long way baby!" both undermining and attempting to absorb

second-wave feminist counter-hegemonic struggles by defining smoking itself as independence and liberating.

Deviance.

In 1963, Howard Becker published seminal work that was foundational for labelling theory in social deviance studies. He advocated that human engagement in deviant activities be studied with the intent of understanding the nature of the phenomenon, considering multiple and contradictory perspectives and situations. He cautioned against efforts to identify an underlying *value* or *truth* of the phenomenon. Becker portrays deviance as an interpretation shaped by societal processes rather than a quality of the person or activity. He stated:

> *Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance,* and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is *not* a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender." The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label. (p. 9)

From the position of deviance theory, then, occupations that are widely perceived as socially unacceptable become defined as deviant and subject to sanctions. In turn those who engage in such occupations also become labelled as deviant, which may make it harder to pursue socially sanctioned or expected occupations, leaving them more likely to engage in further "deviance." For example, someone who is labelled through a mental health diagnosis or a criminal record maybe be hindered from obtaining conventional employment, rendering illicit forms of livelihood more likely.

Engaging in sex work is dominantly viewed as deviant and variably prohibited

according to jurisdiction. Nevertheless, many people around the world engage in sex work in many forms, such as prostitution, escort services, street walking, pornography, and online or telephone sex services. Transactions occur in many locations, including brothels, hotels, massage parlors, cars, strip clubs and the internet. An estimated 6 million women and girls work in the sex industry worldwide (Anderson, 2014). While estimates of men and boys in sex work are not available, of individuals arrested for sex work approximately 20% in the USA and 30% in France are men (Minichiello & Scott, 2014). A study of university students in Canada, Sweden, Germany, and the US found 0.5% of university students received payment for online sex services (Döring, Daneback, Shaughnessy, Grov, & Byers, 2017). Sex tourism is garnering more publicity, suggesting that people from developed countries are more likely to seek certain types of sexual experiences in less developed countries assuming they will be judged less harshly than if they engaged in that same activity in their home country (Carrier-Moisan, 2015; Kosuri & Jeglic, 2017; Rivers-Moore, 2012).

To approach a study about sex work as inherently a deviant activity engaged in by deviant individuals, risks allowing predetermined labels to stand in for nuanced understanding of the occupation. To neglect the study of sex work as an occupation can negate the experience of millions of people around the world, which leads to partial understandings and contributes to silencing.

Resistance.

Resistance is generally understood to be an act of opposition that occurs in relation to hegemony and unequal distribution of power (Scott, 1990). Although within dominant power relations resistance is often framed as non-sanctioned and disruptive, resistance has productive and transformative potential. Brighenti (2011) suggests that resistance is a concept beyond opposition; rather, "[t]he resistant subject is a creator" (p. 73). While

power dynamics reside in the present, resistance is transformative and "opens the present to becoming" a new way of being (p. 74).

Early hip hop music and related occupations, for example, emerged in the Bronx in United States and formed a type of resistance against racial politics and the mainstream music industry functioning to create "an autonomous space for putting citizenship into practice" (Lamotte, 2014, p. 686). Hip hop has spread among urban marginalized youth internationally, an occupational expression of resistance such as Arab hip hop arising from the war on terror discourse of exclusion and Othering (Drury, 2017), Kenya's Hip Hop Parliament collective opposing political corruption and violence (Marsh & Petty, 2011), and Inuit youth in Canada resisting colonized representations of identity (Marsh, 2009).

Building from West and Zimmerman's (1987)argument that gender is something that is constantly socially reconstructed through doing based on normative conceptions of men and women, Deutsch (2007) proposes the process of undoing gender and countering gender inequity through acts of resistance. Resistance may take the form of occupation, such as girls joining a boys' hockey team or mothers choosing to take leisure time. Similarly, Connell (2010) suggests that when transgender and gender non-binary people choose occupations that highlight discordance among sex, gender identity and gender expression, they are "redoing" gender. Such everyday acts of resistance counter power relations that structure certain forms of doing along a strict feminine/masculine binary, simultaneously countering gender inequities in occupational possibilities. Studying occupations as forms of resistance can contribute to building a knowledge base regarding the transformative potential of occupation, revealing the ways in which non-normative forms of doing can be responses to injustice.

Sanctioned and non-sanctioned occupations in occupational science

In the occupational science and occupational therapy literature non-sanctioned

occupations are predominantly constructed as deviant, and presented in relation to

marginalised populations. There have been insightful and important studies of that make

mention of occupations such as panhandling, gang involvement, substance use, and

survival occupations (e.g., theft, paid sex, violence), as outlined in Table 1, but it is

critical to note these have been uniformly aligned with socially marginalised groups.

Table 1: Studies pertaining to non-sanctioned occupations

Article	Occupation(s)	Population(s)
Bazyk & Bazyk (2009)	"Risky," "passive," or "aggressive" occupations (e.g., smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, gang involvement, violent video games, sex, fighting)	"Low income youths," youth living in fragmented families
Blank, Finlay & Prior (2016)	Substance misuse, self-harm	People with "mental health and substance misuse problems"
Elliot (2012)	Disordered eating	Individuals with eating disorders
Finlayson, Baker, Rodman, & Herzberg (2002)	Substance abuse	Homeless population
Gerlach (2015)	Panhandling, begging, "lining up to get into a shelter or to get a hot meal," "getting a fix for an addiction"	"Marginalized populations" (e.g.. people who experience homelessness, Indigenous peoples, recent immigrants who experience racism and discrimination, people living with chronic mental health and/or substance-use issues)
Goertz, Benedict, Bui, Peitz, Ryba, & Cahill (2007)	Acts of violence (e.g., bullying, verbal threats, physical assault, domestic abuse, gun violence)	Youth who experience risk factors (e.g., history of abuse, school truancy, poor time use, criminal exposure, mental illness, substance use, gang involvement, access to guns, lack of support structures)

Illman, Spence, O'Campo & Kirsh (2013)	Occupations that ensure survival or involve risk (e.g., self-harm, theft, committing violent acts, sex in exchange for money, substance use)	Homeless adults who experience mental illness
Kielhofner, Braveman, Fogg, & Levin (2008)	Substance abuse	People living with HIV/AIDS
Marshall & Rosenberg (2014)	- Building a shelter in an urban environment - Sex work - Bottle collecting - Panhandling - Substance use	People who are homeless or transitioning from homelessness
McNulty, Crowe, Kroening, VanLeit & Good (2009)	Smoking cigarettes (as "personal care" and "participation/socialization")	Women with children who live in an emergency homeless shelter for survivors of domestic violence
Peralta-Catipon & Hwang (2011)	"Health risk behaviors" (e.g., smoking cigarettes, heavy alcohol consumption)	Older adults
Tsang, Davis & Polatajko (2013)	"Harmful occupations" (e.g., substance abuse, gang involvement)	People who are homelessness
Waghorn, Hielscher, Atyeo & Saha (2016)	Substance abuse or dependence	Individuals with psychotic disorders

Examining non-sanctioned occupations only in relation to certain marginalised social groups can unintentionally problematise both the occupation and the group, lending support to the construction of deviance. Note that while Twinley (2013) also

calls for attention to oft-silenced aspects of occupation, labelling these the 'dark side' of occupation seems a pejorative framework. Broadening the analytic lens through attending to how all occupations are sanctioned and non-sanctioned can shed important light on occupation in social context, illuminating nuances at individual, collective, and systemic levels.

For instance, if survival sex, as an occupation engaged in by homeless people (Illman et al, 2013), were not cast as inherently different from the negotiations around sexual activity that occur within most intimate relationships (which often include an underlying economic component) new understandings of sexually-related occupations might emerge. Survival sex, sex trade work, and sex within intimate relationships are all related occupations differing primarily by degree of social sanction and the social groups within which they tend to be studied. Occupations like sex work, engaging in crime, selling or using drugs, panhandling, and vagrancy are often judged as poor choices or evidence of poor moral character. This perspective assumes that agency occurs at the individual level and that all potential options are equally available to all people; it fails to unearth social forces that shape occupations.

Yet, there is increasing recognition that many constraints shape occupational engagement. De Coster and Heimer (2017) refer to this as "choice within constraint," acknowledging that actions are not predetermined by circumstances. For example, when the occupations of hegemonic masculinity require authority, expertise and professional status that are not resources available to many racialized men in US cities, their occupations of masculinity must take other forms: "Their marginalized masculinity is characterized by competition through physical fights, heterosexuality, responsibility for oneself, and the use of violence" (p. 13). When other opportunities are unavailable, masculinity may disproportionately rest on physical responses to disrespect and threats

to reputation, occupational engagements that are non-sanctioned.

By attending to sanctioning as a socio-political process influenced by hegemonic practices, occupational scientists can advance understandings of processes that shape occupations. For instance, in research addressing the negotiation of long-term unemployment as well as discouraged workers, Aldrich, Dickie and Laliberte Rudman (2017) explored "resource seeking" as a survival occupation. Challenging the dominant construction of those without work as idle, lazy and unoccupied, their exploration sought to examine what occupations actually comprise the daily lives of persons whose lives have been absent of sanctioned paid work. It reveals an array of resource seeking occupations, such as using food banks or pantries and finding and applying for government assistance programs, that are shaped through contemporary social policies and services for the unemployed and that are often stigmatized as indicative of dependency and hidden from societal view. Explicating these types of occupations can both point to the ways that forms and meanings of particular occupations, such as food procurement, are shaped by larger social and political conditions, and also challenge discourses that frame those outside the formal labour force as dependent, passive and lacking in skills and knowledge.

Similarly, recent research by Kiepek and Beagan (2018) exploring substance use by professionals and students in professional programs challenges dominant constructions of substance use as inherently problematic, and notes aspects of self-control through this occupation that may demand re-examination of theories and interpretations derived from substance use research in marginalized social groups. There seems to be a disparity, such that some people are viewed to have more self-control and should be afforded more self-determination regarding substance use than others. This can be viewed as a form of Othering, the social process of separating from stigmatised

"Others" who are marked as different, thereby confirming what is understood as "normal" (Grove & Zwi, 2006; Weis, 1995).

The subtle depiction of non-sanctioned occupations as deviant is reinforced by a tendency to focus on corrective practices, such as reducing harm or encouraging conformity with dominant social conventions. For instance, an examination of the meaning of tagging among adolescents concludes with assertions that elements of tagging have "health promoting aspects that can be harnessed," (Russell, 2008, p. 95) and advocates for channelling the skills and abilities inherent in tagging to "more socially acceptable occupations" (p. 95), such as community arts projects. In a reversed approach, a study of smoking cessation (Luck & Beagan, 2015) involved people who had already quit smoking, thus already engaged in corrective practices, yet shows how smoking was a highly meaningful and valued occupation. In this instance, study of a non-sanctioned occupation is rendered more palatable through a focus on those who have abandoned the undesired occupation.

Researchers are embedded in social systems that attribute value according to social and professional epistemologies, values, and discourses. Accordingly, scholars face challenges associated with expectations of conformity to dominant perspectives and constructs, while simultaneously challenging those systems and beliefs (e.g., accessing funding, acceptance for publication). Although occupational science is not expected to necessarily inform practice, given its roots in occupational therapy the underlying principles and values from that profession may carry over. Some of these values may be the belief in occupation as enhancing health, well-being, and justice. As such, there may be implicit pressure to frame understandings of non-sanctioned occupations in terms of potential transformation to conform with social ideals. If so, this interpretive twist may misconstrue the occupation itself.

Graffiti provides a good example, based on efforts undertaken in public practices in North America. Some municipalities have created socially acceptable, dedicated spaces for engaging in graffiti. Harm reduction strategies such as the use of safety masks have been promoted, and engaging in graffiti has been promoted more broadly, to include diverse participants. Commercialisation and media attention have brought the occupation into the mainstream. Yet, altering how the occupation is performed, who performs it, the level of risk, and the legality may transform the occupation from one of resistance to one that is more sanitised. In the process, how might the meaning of the occupation be changed? And are some voices silenced?

Exploration of non-sanctioned occupations would demand that researchers situate their values and commitments rather than attempting to render those invisible or irrelevant. We do not believe that researchers can or should be "neutral" or non-judgemental, but we can be more reflexive and transparent about how our social positionality impacts our interpretations. When examining occupations that are non-sanctioned, it is important to employ non-voyeuristic approaches and avoid positioning the occupations and those who engage in them as exotic. Otherwise, we unintentionally reinforce the Othering of some occupations and some social groups, casting them as deviant.

There are examples of approaches to examine non-sanctioned occupations in ways that minimize constructions of deviance. Russell (2008) provides an early example of an examination of a predominantly non-sanctioned occupation, tagging. She explicitly states an intention to examine tagging outside a lens of disability or therapy. She does, however, integrate an analysis of tagging framed by positive meaning and relation to health and well-being, which effectively 'sanctions' the occupation. Similarly, Haines, Smith, and Baxter (2010) present findings about skateboarding by

youth as a "risk-taking occupation" (p. 240) in relation to positive meaning. They note that the positive meaning of skateboarding, "achieving one's best and the core value of freedom" (p. 239) outweighs the potential risk of injury for participants. In this way, the occupation is presented as conforming to social values and mastery, which are viewed positively in Western culture.

In comparison, Pyatak and Muccitelli (2011) provide an historical analysis of rap music that goes beyond the individual meaning of engagement in rap as an occupation, situating the occupation as a resistive response to social and political contexts. The occupation is presented in relation to post-colonial theory, power, and dominance, integrating multiple perspectives of rap music. Cloete and Ramugondo (2015) explored alcohol use as an occupation by women and the contextual factors that influence consumption during pregnancy. Substance use is framed as influenced by environmental, historical, cultural, socioeconomic, and socio-political factors. For instance, Dutch and English colonialists paid labourers with tobacco, bread and low quality wine. In a context where social drinking is the norm, it is part of a daily routine that also involves securing food, maintaining security, and building community. By countering the dominant construction of consuming alcohol during pregnancy as "bad," deviant, unhealthy, risky, and irresponsible, the authors unearth important insights into the historical, political and social shaping of occupations in daily life.

Conclusion: Expanding our lens in the study of non-sanctioned occupations

Scholarship in occupational science that has engaged with transactional and critical perspectives has convincingly emphasized the need to attend to the situated nature of occupation, pointing to limits of understandings of meaning that focus solely or primarily on individual meanings or experiences of occupation (Dickie, Cutchin, & Humphry, 2006; Laliberte Rudman & Huot, 2012). Recognising the contextualised

nature of occupation, it is thus vital to examine how an occupation has been socially constructed, in a specific place and time, how those constructions shape and are shaped by broader social values, power relations, and discourses, and how both engagement in and avoidance of that occupation may display compliance with or resistance to dominant constructions of acceptability and unacceptability. This suggests that examining socially non-sanctioned occupations can illuminate the subtle and not-so-subtle ways socio-political forces enable and constrain occupation, as well as the ways occupations maintain, subvert or transform dominant social values and discourses and contribute to social transformation. These understandings can, in turn, generate key insights regarding the situated nature of occupation, and inform efforts aim at challenging and transforming limits on occupational possibilities that shape inequities and injustices.

Sanctioning of occupation is a social process that is fluid and contextually constituted, one in which educators, researchers, publishers, editors, and funders are complicit, not a natural feature of an occupation. We propose that it is imperative to ask ourselves how we may contribute to or reify silences as a result of our choices about what our research questions are, who and how we engage participants in research, which theoretical and philosophical approaches are drawn on, and which methodologies are used. The relevance of occupational science depends on how well the field represents diversity of human engagement in occupation, including those that are not socially sanctioned. In moving beyond sanctioned occupations, occupational scientists must examine our own assumptions, interpretations, and intentions, considering what kinds of occupations may be rendered inappropriate for serious inquiry. We need to resist adopting lenses in the study of occupations that problematise particular occupations which exist outside those deemed acceptable, healthy, or normative. Rather,

exploration of diverse occupations can enhance our understanding of occupation itself

and the relevance of our knowledge generation to diverse audiences and about social

issues. Broader understandings of occupation can inform transformative scholarship that

seeks to re-imagine and expand occupational possibilities and challenge unnecessary

boundaries constructed for particular occupations and social groups.

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