Examining Sport-for-Development Using a Critical Occupational Approach to Research

by

Janet Njelesani

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Operating under the rubric of sport-for-development, nongovernmental organizations have mobilized sport activities as a tool for international development. Along with these initiatives, a scholarly analysis of the phenomenon has emerged. However, this body of research has not included analysis from a critical occupational perspective. This is a conspicuous shortcoming since, in the language of occupational science, sport-for-development initiatives are occupation-based programs.

This study explored sport-for-development using a critical occupational approach to research I constructed, wherein the central site of knowledge production was occupations used in sport-for-development programs. Through five case studies with sport-for-development organizations in Lusaka, Zambia, I describe how staff and youth participants spoke about and understood the use of sport occupations in sport-for-development programs and the sport-for-development ideologies and practices in Zambia and how these shaped the participation of youth. Data generation included observing program activities, interviewing participants, and analyzing organization documents.

The findings drew attention to the form, function, and meaning of the sport occupations used in sport-for-development, and illuminate that football, which is a heavily gendered and segregated sport, was constructed as the preferential activity for programs. This prioritization of football, in conjunction with a hierarchical, authoritative approach to
decision making, and focus on the development of youths’ sports skills, led to athletic, non-disabled boys living in urban areas being the primary beneficiaries of the programs. I argue that the ideological beliefs that re/produced these understandings contributed to occupational injustices by (1) contributing to the practice of sport being used uncritically as an activity for all youth, (2) perpetuating what were considered acceptable activities for boys and girls in the local context to do, and (3) defining boys in opposition to girls, rural youth, poor youth, and youth with disabilities from both genders. Finally, I propose directions for institutionally-orientated actions to address occupational injustices and consideration of the wider uses and implications of a critical occupational approach within health and social research.
Acknowledgments

“Uwa kwensha ubushiku bamutasha ilyo bwacha.” (Zambian Bemba proverb)
“\textit{He who guides you in the night is only thanked in the morning.}”

There are many people who have guided me through my PhD journey and now that I have reached this destination it is my time to express how thankful I am to all of those who have provided such guidance and illuminated the way for me.

I would like to extend my gratitude to all of the staff and youth from the sport-for-development programs who shared their time, hopes, and wisdom with me. Without them, this study would not have been possible.

Thank you to my co-supervisors Dr. Helene Polatajko and Dr. Debra Cameron. Dr. Polatajko, from the very beginning your recognition that a person’s best work comes out of their passion resulted in a research project that has captivated and motivated me right through the end. Thank you for always upholding such a strong commitment to excellence, I am incredibly proud of all that I have accomplished that I wouldn’t have thought possible four years ago. Dr. Cameron, thank you for recognizing my curiosity for learning and whole heartedly supporting me to return back to study. Without your belief in me and my study I could not have even started this journey. Your commitment to our field has instilled in me a passion for global health and occupational science that only continues to grow.

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In addition to those guiding my way there are many people who have walked the path beside me. Many thanks to my GDRS and CPGH colleagues, and fellow H.O.E.P. lab mates for taking the time to listen to my ideas and providing me ways of seeing my problems as opportunities to learn. Evelyne Durocher and Lynn Rutledge, I look forward to many more critical social theory discussions over nachos. Sarah Steele, I look forward to learning more about the world of epidemiology over family braais. Jane Davis, thank you for being so gracious with sharing your time and wisdom. Not only has your gift for always finding the best reference helped me enormously but more importantly I have learned from you how to stoke the fire for qualitative research in the hearts of students. I am also grateful to all of my friends outside of the University of Toronto who graciously accommodated their schedules to fit with my deadlines, making sure I was never left out of book club and life’s celebrations.

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To my family that spans across Canada and Zambia. Thank you to my parents, Arthur and Pamela Hay, for nurturing my inquisitiveness and encouraging different ways of learning. To my brother Arthur and sister Rebecca, you both understood my need for lifelong learning and were less surprised than I was when I returned to school – thank you for your unconditional support. Kawesha and Marcus, thank you for your patience as I sat at my laptop trying to get in just a bit more work before we made time to play. To Evarist and Prisca Njelesani, I am grateful that you so graciously accepted me into your home and more importantly into your hearts. Your creation of a place for me to unwind, work, and talk, made me appreciate and understand Zambia and our family that much more. To Donald, thank you for walking beside me throughout this journey either holding my hand or giving me a little push as needed. Your ability to challenge me on a daily basis to be a better student, wife, and person has meant the world to me and I look forward to embarking on our next journey together.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Sport is a universal language. At its best it can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status. And when young people participate in sports or have access to physical education, they can experience real exhilaration even as they learn the ideals of teamwork and tolerance. That is why the United Nations is turning more and more to the world of sport for help in our work for peace and our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

(Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary General, 2004)

1 Examining sport-for-development using a critical occupational approach

Recent years have seen a proliferation of nongovernmental organizations mobilizing sport activities as a tool for international development (Kidd, 2008). These organizations operate under the rubric of sport-for-development. In the language of occupational science, sport-for-development initiatives are based on activities (e.g., football, basketball, netball, etc.) or occupations (i.e., “groups of activities which are named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture” [Canadian Association of Occupational Therapist, 1997, p. 34]). Examples of sport-for-development programs using occupations as a tool include the use of football by Right to Play as a means to prevent HIV in Uganda, and the use of bowling by UNICEF in its bowl-out-polio campaign in Afghanistan.

Along with the recent popularity of sport-for-development, scholarly research of this phenomenon has emerged. This research has come predominantly from the fields of sport sociology and physical education. Sport-for-development research has covered diverse areas (e.g., health, education, child and youth development, peace building, and economic development) with a wide range of stakeholders (e.g., volunteers, donors, staff, and youth
participants) in many regions worldwide (e.g., Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, India, and the Middle East).

Although there has been a rapid expansion of sport-for-development and a concomitant rise in research, most of the research that has been undertaken has tended to be portrayed as functional, unproblematic, and dominated by hard facts (i.e., positivist forms of knowledge) (Kay, 2009, p. 1178). Cautionary tales about privileging positivist forms of knowledge have been brought forward along with critical questions about sport-for-development. Donnelly (2008) argued that this purely positive representation of sport as undoubtedly serving as a tool for development is problematic. For example, because competitive sport is based on social exclusion, it may promote the very injustices (e.g., exclusion of girl youth) that it aims to address in the first place. Kidd (2008) further contended that sport should not be represented uncritically in an essentialist or positivist light because it is a social construct. Darnell (2012) argued that “without conducting critical analysis, the relations of power, privilege, and dominance that result in a small number of haves and a large number of have-nots, will not be challenged” (p. 18). The need for further critical research is supported by these recognitions of the current literature being dominated by positivist forms of knowledge as well as the need to ask critical questions. As noted by Maguire,

That the UN Secretary General places such importance on sport highlights its growing global significance. Our task is to examine this significance, noting the potentiality as well as the problems of global sport (2006, p.109).

Notwithstanding the emergence of an academic analysis, sport-for-development is still poorly understood. A lack of evidence has contributed to this poor understanding (Nicholls, Giles, & Sethna, 2011). There is widespread recognition that more rigorous research could address this issue by creating a more robust evidence base (Hayhurst, 2008; Kay, 2009; Levermore, 2008; Nicholls et al., 2011). In addition to the calls for greater empirical evidence, Donnelly et al. (2011) have noted the need for alternative research methods and the engagement of other disciplines in sport-for-development research. Furthermore, Nicholls et al. (2011) suggested that there is a need for better research, not just more research. They pointed out that sport-for-development stories
need to be captured in a new way, and that research must value the knowledge that exists in local communities (Nicholls et al., 2011).

In addition to the call for further critical research, there has been a call for empirical studies that examine the perspectives of program youth engaged in sport-for-development. According to Jeanes (2011), “despite the increasing breadth of study within this area to date, academic analysis has rarely considered the views and perceptions of young people involved, although they are a key target group of many Global South interventions” (p. 2). This exclusion of youth participants’ perspectives has contributed to the poor understanding of sport-for-development (Nicholls & Giles, 2007).

From my position as an occupational scientist, trained in a science that aims to explore the nature and structure of occupation (Yerxa et al., 1989), I view the sport-for-development literature as having one further shortcoming. Specifically, research has yet to include an analysis of sport-for-development wherein the sport used is the explicit site of knowledge re/production (i.e., active political sites where meanings are generated and contested [Njelesani, Gibson, Nixon, Cameron, & Polatajko, under review]). This is a conspicuous shortcoming given that sport-for-development initiatives use sport activities as their primary method of program delivery. From an occupational perspective, sport-for-development programs are, in essence, occupational in nature – that is, in the language of occupational science, they are centred around an occupation, sports. Yet, despite the centrality of occupations to sport-for-development, no discussions can be found in the literature that emanate from an occupational perspective. Indeed, even a search of journals with a specific focus on occupation – for instance, the American, Australian, British, and Canadian journals of occupational therapy, the World Federation of Occupational Therapists Bulletin, and the Journal of Occupational Science – yielded no relevant articles. Rather, the majority of the research literature on the use of occupations to achieve international development goals has focused on rehabilitation for people living with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries as well as the implications of this for the practice of occupational therapy (Bangirana et al., 2009; Kamba & Rugg, 2008; Seedat, Haskis, & Stein, 2008; Stickley, 2010). Only a small component of that literature focuses on the unique contribution that occupational science
might bring to international development across the world (Kronenberg, Algado, & Pollard, 2005; Kronenberg, Pollard, & Sakellariou, 2011; Watson & Swartz, 2004). For example, Thibeault’s (2002) work in post-conflict Sierra Leone demonstrates how occupations such as caring for older adults, sewing, and fish salting can be used to promote gender equality and socioeconomic development among war victims. However, even that literature fails to identify the possible contributions of sport-for-development. It is my contention that examination of the sport-for-development phenomenon from a critical occupational perspective could greatly improve our understanding of this movement.

To summarize, the current state of the literature surrounding the sport-for-development phenomenon identifies that: (a) sport-for-development programs are being widely adopted; (b) there is a need for critical research and the engagement of other disciplines in its examination; (c) youth’s perspectives have been given minimal consideration; (d) no study of sport-for-development from the field of occupational science exists; and (e) there is no research that includes an analysis of sport activities as the site of knowledge re/production. Together, the existence and confluence of these five issues point to the need for an examination of the phenomenon from a critical occupational approach that incorporates the perspectives of both program staff and youth. It is my contention that bringing a critical occupational approach to sport-for-development research will add to the scholarly understanding of the phenomenon and inform policy and practice. Thus, it was the purpose of the doctoral research presented here to conduct an examination of the sport-for-development phenomenon using a critical occupational approach.

2 Thesis organization

This thesis is presented in manuscript style. It consists of seven chapters. Chapters 1 and 7 serve to introduce the thesis as a whole and draw together the various findings of the work, respectively. Chapters 2 through 6 present the literature review, methods, and findings. Each of these chapters was written to stand as an independent paper and is either in print (chapters 2 and 3), under review (chapter 4), or submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal (chapters 5 and 6). These papers build on each other. Chapter 2, a
scoping review, provides evidence of the gap in the literature that the dissertation aims to fill. Chapters 3 and 4 lay out the conceptual foundations of the dissertation; chapter 3 proposes that an occupational perspective be defined as a way of looking at or thinking about patterns of doing, while chapter 4 articulates the specifics of a critical occupational approach. Chapters 5 and 6 provide empirical contributions to the study’s aim (see Table 1.1 for a summary of the organization of this manuscript-style thesis, including the publication status of each manuscript). Together, these five manuscripts identify gaps in the sport sociology and occupational science literature; introduce a critical occupational approach to research; and offer uses and implications for this approach within health and social research, particularly for the study and practice of sport-for-development.

I have chosen to write this thesis using personal pronouns in order to emphasize my role as researcher and author, and my ownership of this thesis and the ideas herein. In chapters 1 and 7, as I am the sole author I use singular personal pronouns (e.g., I, my); however, because chapters 2-6 are multi-authored papers, first-person plural pronouns (e.g., we, our) are used instead in those chapters. Throughout the thesis, footnotes are used for explanatory or supplementary information. Generally the footnotes contain contextual information for readers who may be unfamiliar with the Zambian context.
Table 1.1  Dissertation outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter #</th>
<th>Manuscript/Chapter Title</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>An Occupational Perspective of Single-Occupation-Based International Development Programs</td>
<td><em>Journal of Occupational Science</em></td>
<td>Published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Articulating an Occupational Perspective</td>
<td><em>Journal of Occupational Science</em></td>
<td>Published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Towards a Critical Occupational Approach to Research</td>
<td><em>International Qualitative Journal of Methods</em></td>
<td>Under review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A Critical Occupational Approach: Offering Insights on the Sport-for-Development Playing Field</td>
<td><em>Sport in Society</em></td>
<td>Submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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In the remainder of this introductory chapter I will present the aim, purposes, and methodology of the thesis. As well, I will clarify key concepts integral to the dissertation and discuss the reasoning behind their inclusion in this study. Finally, I will describe my positionality and the research context.

3  Research aim and purposes

The overall aim of the study was to examine sport-for-development programs using a critical occupational approach. The central site of knowledge production was considered to be occupations used in sport-for-development programs.

Specific purposes of the study were:

1. To examine how staff and youth participants spoke about and understood the use of sport occupations in sport-for-development programs in Lusaka, Zambia (chapter 5).
2. To examine how sport-for-development ideologies and practices in Lusaka, Zambia, shape the participation of youth (chapter 6).

4 Methodology

Carter and Little (2007) defined good qualitative research as “research that attends to all three elements (epistemology, methodology, and method) and demonstrates internal consistency between them” (p. 1316). Below I describe the epistemology, methodology, and methods that I incorporated in my study, and examine how these three elements were consistent with one another.

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge (Schwandt, 2001). My research is grounded in a critical epistemology. Therefore, I assume that social reality is historically constituted and that it is re/produced by people. I also hold the belief that although people can consciously act to change their social and economic circumstances, their ability to do so may be constrained by various forms of social, cultural, and political domination (Prasad, 2005).

A methodology may be defined as “a theory and analysis of how research should proceed” (Harding, 1987, p. 2). Using this definition, methodology is a theoretically informed approach to the construction of a study including data generation and analysis. I brought tenets of a critical epistemology into my methodology by using a critical occupational approach in conjunction with qualitative case study design.

A critical occupational approach can be used to examine the assumptions and ideologies underlying human activity, how knowledge is re/produced through engagement in occupation, who controls the knowledge re/production, the mechanisms of how occupations are taken up, and who stands to gain or lose from them (see chapter 4: Njelesani, Gibson, Nixon, Cameron, & Polatajko, under review). A critical occupational approach considers occupation to be a site of knowledge re/production rather than the object of inquiry. Recognizing occupation as a site of knowledge re/production acknowledges that the meanings associated with an occupation are transient and dependent on context. These meanings are constantly being reproduced among social
actors and are evolving in reaction to changes in context. Therefore, knowledge re/production involves the social re/production of knowledge in relation to the political, economic, cultural, and social contexts of an occupation. Further, the meanings associated with an occupation have co-constituting relationships with its context because changes in the meaning of occupation also affect the socio-political environment.

A critical occupational approach is particularly useful for the study of sport-for-development because:

1. Sport-for-development programs use sport as a primary means of achieving their goals, and sports are occupations.

2. This approach answers the call for critical research (Kay, 2009), alternative methodologies, and engagement of other disciplines in sport-for-development research (Donnelly et al., 2011).

3. This approach brings attention to how gender, ability, and other social categories intersect to mediate participation in sport activities.

4. This approach focuses on uncovering ideologies associated with sport occupations and how these might influence marginalization or oppression.

As a critical occupational approach does not prescribe a particular study design (see chapter 4: Njelesani et al., under review), I chose to use the multiple case study design described by Stake (2006). I considered this appropriate because it fits well with the objectives of the study. I agree with Stake’s (1995) view that “case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied” (p. 443). In this definition, “case study is not a methodology because it does not provide a parsimonious theory of how research should proceed with conceptually coherent methods and accompanying data collection procedures that map onto the theory” (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p. 83). Using this definition, case studies are differentiated from other study designs because the focus of the research is on what Stake (1995) calls a bounded system. The bounded system for this study included sport-for-development organizations, and the occupations used in these programs were seen as the central site of knowledge production.
One’s methodology informs one’s selection of methods, including data collection and analysis techniques. As detailed in chapter 4, choosing methods for a critical occupational approach is not substantially different from the process used for any other type of study. The methods I used were based on the nature, aims, and goals of my research. Data were generated using multiple methods, including observing program activities, interviewing participants, and analyzing organization documents. The combination of several methods developed converging lines of inquiry, which facilitated a thicker description and deeper understanding of the data. Data were analyzed through incorporating two levels of analysis, micro (i.e., focused at the level of the individual) and macro (i.e., focused at the level of social structure). In chapter 5, where the research aim was to explore how program staff and youth spoke about and understood the use of sport occupations in sport-for-development programs, I focused my analysis at the micro level. That is, I focused on individual’s perspectives. In chapter 6, whereas the aim was to examine the dominant ideologies that contributed to re/producing participants’ understandings, the analytic emphasis was at the broader macro level.

5 Ethical procedures

As a researcher I had an obligation to respect the rights of the participants (Creswell, 2004). The proposed methods of inquiry disturbed and invaded the day-to-day experiences of participants, and there was always the potential for sensitive information to be discussed. To address three main ethical issues of consent, confidentiality, and trust as described by Ryen (2004), the following were done:

1. Study objectives were shared with participants both verbally and in writing to ensure comprehensive understanding, see Appendices A, C, & E for recruitment letters.

2. A valid written and verbal consent was obtained from participants that addressed disclosure, voluntariness, and capacity. See Appendices B, D, & F for consent forms.

3. Participants were informed of all data collection devices and activities.
4. Participants’ rights, interests, and wishes were considered first when choices were made regarding data reporting.

5. Reports will be made available to the participants. These two-page, plain-language, accessible reports will be sent to the participating Zambian organizations. Access will also be provided to all publications.

6. A pseudonym was assigned to each organization and participant in the transcripts, papers, and reports to protect confidentiality.

7. Institutional ethics approval was obtained from the University of Toronto on January 12, 2011, and the University of Zambia on February 28, 2011.

6 Key concepts

A number of terms used throughout this dissertation warrant clarification. These are listed and defined in Table 1.2. Among these are a few of concepts that have particular prominence in this dissertation, namely: activity, occupation, occupational science, occupational justice, and sport-for-development. These terms will now be discussed in greater detail.
Table 1.2  Key concept definitions

<table>
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<th>Concept</th>
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<td>Activity</td>
<td>A set of tasks with a specific end point or outcome that is greater than that of any constituent task (Polatajko et al., 2007, p. 19).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied (Stake, 1996, p. 438).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical social science</td>
<td>Consists of a set of reflexive questions concerning the implicit assumptions and ideologies underlying the research process, and the role of power, contradiction and dialectical relationship in theory and research practice (Eakin, Robertson, Poland, Coburn, &amp; Edwards, 1996, p. 157).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>A broad system of shared beliefs which serve to justify and support the interests of a particular group or organization (Eagleton, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International development</td>
<td>A process of enabling people’s choices and increasing the opportunities available to all members of society (United Nations Development Program, 2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Groups of activities and tasks of everyday life, named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture (CAOT, 1997, p. 34).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational form</td>
<td>The what, how, where, and who of a given occupation; that is, its observable aspects (Larson &amp; Zemke, 2003).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational function</td>
<td>The purpose or intended outcome of participating in an occupation (Larson &amp; Zemke, 2003).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational justice</td>
<td>A concept that can be used to guide consideration of diverse occupational needs, strengths, and potentials of individuals and groups, while taking into account occupational enablement, empowerment, rights, and fairness (Stadnyk, 2007).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational meaning</td>
<td>The significance of the occupation within the context of a person’s life and culture (Larson &amp; Zemke, 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational perspective</td>
<td>A way of looking at or thinking about patterns of doing (Njelesani, Tang, Jonsson, &amp; Polatajko, 2012, p. 8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational science</td>
<td>A basic science, which would explore the phenomenon of occupation in its entirety (Molke, Laliberte-Rudman, &amp; Polatajko, 2004, p. 270).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positionality</td>
<td>A way that people are defined not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed (Maher &amp; Tetreault, 1994, p. 164).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport development</td>
<td>The development of sport to enhance performance in sport as an end itself (Beacom, 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport-for-development</td>
<td>All types of organized physical activity that may serve as a tool for development and peace (Levermore &amp; Beacom, 2009, p. 33).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1 Occupation

All humans engage in occupations of one form or another (Wilcock, 1996; Yerxa et al., 1989). Occupations include all activities in which a person participates over the course of a day, such as personal care, childcare, work, school, household maintenance, and leisure activities. Although a number of definitions appear in the literature, for the purposes of this dissertation I have used the definition provided by the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists: “occupation refers to groups of activities and tasks of everyday life, named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture” (CAOT, 1997, p. 34). This definition was chosen based on its emphasis on the meaning of the occupation for the individual and the culture, as well as for the assumptions underlying the definition, including that humans are occupational beings; occupation brings meaning to life; occupations are idiosyncratic; and occupations are embedded within the environment (Polatajko et al., 2007). Another factor that led me to choose this definition of occupation is that, within the definition, occupation is explicitly referred to not only as work but as all manner of human doing.

The emphasis on meaning is congruent with my assumption that occupations carry culturally embedded meanings, and these meanings are produced and reproduced through engagement in occupations. As occupations are named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and their culture, they are considered to be relative concepts with alternative meanings within different cultural contexts. For instance, the occupation of attending church holds significant importance for Zambians (Arnett, 2007). The meaning associated with this occupation goes far beyond learning about God. Attending church involves making and sustaining relationships and personal networks, which is important in a context where face-to-face social interaction is valued over other forms, and where opportunities for employment most often arise out of these networks.

Secondly, the assumption that occupations are idiosyncratic is congruent with my belief that each person has their own occupations, ascribes their own meaning to them, and does them in their own way. This idea of the idiosyncrasy of occupations was essential when I
was examining the belief held in the sport-for-development literature that sport is a universal activity for all youth.

The final key element in the context of this study, taken from the above assumptions, is the idea that occupations are embedded within the environment. This assumption is congruent with my theoretical perspective wherein I understand occupations to be both enabled and constrained by political, economic, and socio-cultural contexts. For example, in Zambia, the occupation of attending school is enabled for children by the current policy of free education up to Grade 7. After Grade 7, the occupation of attending school is constrained by this same policy as many children have to drop out of school because they cannot afford the fees. This recognition of the context in which occupations occur is fundamental to the understanding of occupation as a site of knowledge re/production, which I present in chapter 4.

6.2 Activity

According to the Taxonomic Code of Occupational Performance, occupations are composed of a set of activities, whereby activity is defined as “a set of tasks with a specific end point or outcome that is greater than that of any constituent task” (Polatajko et al., 2007, p. 19). Despite the difference in meaning of the terms activity and occupation, I deliberately use them interchangeably in this dissertation. This is because activity is used in the sport-for-development literature, thus I wanted to use language that is familiar to the field and used in manuscripts submitted to sport sociology journals. The key reason for explicitly choosing this term, however, was that activity was the word used by research participants. I assume that none of the sport-for-development literature or research participants used the word occupation because the term did not hold the same meaning for them as it does for me, as an occupational scientist.

6.3 Occupational science

The examination of human occupation emerged as a formal science in the late 1980s in the United States under the leadership and vision of Dr. Elizabeth Yerxa. Occupational science was introduced as a “basic science, which would explore the phenomenon of
occupation in its entirety” (Molke, Laliberte-Rudman, & Polatajko, 2004, p. 270). The aims of occupational science are to “generate knowledge about the form, the function, and the meaning of human occupation” (Zemke & Clark, 1996, p. vii) and to seek to “understand occupations’ centrality in peoples’ lives through generations of knowledge that captures occupations’ richness of meaning” (Primeau, 2000, p. 20).

As a discipline, occupational science acknowledges that it is not enough to merely define occupation; thus, over the past two decades, occupational science has sought to influence society at large through the construction of concepts such as occupational justice. This vision of occupational justice is increasingly mentioned within seminal pieces in the occupational science literature and is described next.

### 6.4 Occupational justice

Occupational justice is a relatively new term within occupational science as it was conceived in the past two decades. The concept of occupational justice was first described by Wilcock in 1998. The term was further developed and named by Wilcock and Townsend in 2000. At that time occupational justice was described as “equitable opportunity and resources to enable people’s engagement in meaningful occupations” (Wilcock & Townsend, 2000, p. 85). The authors expressed the idea that occupational justice and social justice advance a common purpose in the need for societies to be justly governed by a set of principles associated with fairness, empowerment, equitable access to resources, and sharing of rights and responsibilities. Wilcock and Townshend also suggested that occupational justice implies that societies respect and value different occupational capacities and meanings.

The concept of occupational justice has evolved since its conception. Occupational justice has most recently been described as a concept that can be used to guide consideration of diverse occupational needs, strengths, and potentials of individuals and groups, while taking into account occupational enablement, empowerment, rights, and fairness (Stadnyk, 2007). Stadnyk also stated that occupational justice is founded on the
belief that people should have a voice in the organization of the occupations in which they participate, and that honouring differences is important.

Occupational justice is central to a critical occupational approach due to its emphasis on examining the socio-cultural processes that inhibit people from participating in activities. This is exemplified in the assumption underlying the definition of occupational justice that structural factors in interaction with personal contexts can create conditions of occupational justice or injustice. Therefore, this construct was used to juxtapose moral, ethical, and political ideas of justice and occupation to address the participation of youth in sport-for-development.

6.5  Sport-for-development

6.5.1  Defining sport-for-development

Sport-for-development is conceived, explained, understood, and practised in a variety of different ways. For brevity and clarity, I adopt the definition of sport-for-development as “all types of organized physical activity that may serve as a tool for development and peace” (Levermore & Beacom, 2009, p. 33). Given this definition, sport may be viewed as a tool or means through which to achieve development goals. A breadth of initiatives and organizations fall under the label of sport-for-development; while these programs range in size, scope, and focus, all incorporate sport to promote social change within a paradigm of international development (Darnell, 2012, p. 22) and many carry this out through peer educator models (Nicholls, 2009).

I have specifically chosen the term sport-for-development over sport-in-development or sport-through-development, as sport-for-development is the language used by the majority of organizations in Zambia, albeit recognizing that the term sport-for-development may insinuate that the use of sport for development is overwhelmingly positive. Sport-for-development can be distinguished from sport development in that it seeks out those not already involved, and in that it is ostensibly unconcerned about whether participants ever become involved in organized training and competition (Kidd, 2008, p. 373). Sport development is principally concerned with the development of sport
to enhance performance in sport as an end itself (Beacom, 2007) while sport-for-development takes development as its goal. Furthermore, whereas sport development is largely a project of sport organizations, sport-for-development is increasingly pursued by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in partnership with government departments of education and health. Despite their apparent conflicting aims, sport development and sport-for-development are most often not mutually exclusive (Beacom, 2007) and are often blurred in rhetoric and practice (Kidd, 2008). According to Kidd (2008), “while policy and promise employ the language of development, the bulk of funds continue to be invested in sports” (p. 373).

Distinguishing features of sport-for-development are the rapid explosion of the agencies and organizations that are involved, the tremendous appeal it has for youth volunteering, the financial support it enjoys from the powerful international sports federations, and the extent to which it has been championed by the United Nations, its agencies and significant partners. (Kidd, 2008, p. 371)

The targets of sport-for-development programs generally fall under three categories: social issues, health promotion, and economic development (United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force, 2003). A variety of stakeholders are involved in sport-for-development including the United Nations, NGOs, individual program participants, organizations from professional and elite sport, and state and national governments (Darnell, 2012).

### 6.5.2 Emergence of sport-for-development

Since the 1980s, the number of NGOs worldwide has risen, and the majority of these regard the notion of development as inherent to their organizational aims (World Bank, 2005). The notion of development is highly contested; however, for the purposes of this dissertation, development is considered to refer to a process of enabling people’s choices and increasing the opportunities available to all members of society (United Nations Development Program, 2002). Following the conception of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, the MDGs have been accepted by the international development community as the primary framework for measuring development progress. Given the
significance of achieving the MDGs from both international and local country perspectives, the central focus of NGOs working in low- and middle-income countries has shifted towards achieving the MDG targets. As a means of achieving the development objectives embedded in the MDGs, the programming of NGOs has broadened to incorporate initiatives such as the use of sports (Hayhurst, 2009). This use of sports as a vehicle for development was drawn from the experience of using sports domestically (e.g., midnight basketball in Southern U.S. states) for social development.

Sport-for-development is a rapidly emerging phenomenon. Governments and UN agencies as well as international and local NGOs have mobilized sports as a vehicle for broad, sustainable social development, especially in the most disadvantaged communities in the world (Kidd, 2008). As of June 2012, the international platform on sport and development listed 411 projects, and more undoubtedly exist (Sport and Development, 2012). Of these organizations, the vast majority were formed from 2000 onwards, over half are operating in sub-Saharan Africa, and most target children and youth (Sport and Development, 2012). Governments are also using sport-for-development; for example, Zambia has included sport as a part of their national poverty reduction strategy and within its Sixth National Development Plan to address development goals (SNDP, 2011). This rapid recognition that sport-for-development has gained is due in part to it being seen as a simple and low-cost means to achieving the MDGs (Van Eekeren, 2006).

6.5.3 Benefits of sport-for-development

Participation in sport has been touted to involve more than mere improvements in sport skills. Using sport-for-development, it is suggested, provides benefits of improved physical fitness and health, improved mental health and psychological well-being, socio-psychological benefits, as well as broader sociological impacts including increased community identity, social coherence, and integration (SDP IWG, 2007). For example, with regard to improving physical and psychological health, the organization Right to Play – which is perhaps the most well-known NGO to use sport as a tool for development – includes improvement in physical health and healthy child development as two of its objectives (Right to Play, 2012). Sport-for-development has also been seen as a new way
to facilitate and promote developmental goals, especially with its ability to reach young people in communities that are excluded from traditional development activity by way of the broad appeal of sport (UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2005).

### 6.5.4 Sport-for-development dominant ideologies

The concept of ideology holds a range of meanings; for the purposes of this dissertation, I use the following definition: a broad system of shared beliefs which serve to justify and support the interests of a particular group or organization (Eagleton, 1991). I chose this definition of ideology as it signifies dominant forms of thought in a society, not just any set of beliefs, and because it suggests a concern with the function of ideas within social life, not the idea of reality or unreality or an absolute truth (Eagleton, 1991). When examining ideologies in this study, I was concerned with the participants’ use of language for the “production of specific effects” (Eagleton, 1991, p. 9); thereby I focused on who was saying what, about whom, and for what purposes within their contexts.

A number of ideological beliefs have been articulated in the sport-for-development literature. Many are related to the dominant ideology that sport will improve the welfare of Others through development (Darnell, 2012). From this ideology, sport-for-development is assumed to provide better opportunities for Others, wherein Others are the target beneficiaries who are seen as different (e.g., of a different race, class, culture, etc.) from oneself (i.e., the donor).

One prevailing belief in sport-for-development connected to the above ideology is that sport is a universal language (Donnelly, 2008). This has contributed to the practice of sport being seen as an activity that is appropriate for all youth. Nelson Mandela described sport as “being able to speak to people in a language they can understand” and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called sport “a global language capable of bridging social, cultural, and religious divides,” as cited in full at the beginning of this chapter. In this belief, the universal notion of sport for meeting development goals is emphasized; however, according to Darnell (2012),
This invocation of sport is problematic, both in the ways in which they suggest and privilege a particular or universal notion of sport where many occur and the extent to which they suggest that the sporting experience is inherently positive. (p. 45)

Another related belief is that sport is largely apolitical (Darnell, 2012). This apolitical notion of sport has been offered for its usefulness in meeting development goals (Darnell, 2012) and is evident in the following excerpt from the 2005 UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace report:

From international events to the grassroots, sport brings people together in a way that can cross boundaries and break down barriers, making the playing field a simple and often apolitical site for initiating contact between antagonistic groups. (p. 3)

The notion of sport as apolitical serves to depoliticize sport, and therefore does not recognize sport as situated within its social and political context, nor does it acknowledge that the social and political contexts are inherent or essential to the sporting experience. This view of sport as apolitical has contributed to the literature on sport-for-development citing it as value neutral (Sugden, 2010) and politically non-threatening.

7 Reflecting on my positionality

The term positionality describes how people are defined, “not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed” (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, p. 164). Based on this definition, positionality is always considered in relation to the place the researcher occupies with respect to her or his participants, as well as in the world. This acknowledgment of both the researcher’s and participants’ positionalities recognizes the bidirectional nature of research. This idea of the bidirectional nature of research is consistent with the concept of co-constructed knowledge that I value as a qualitative researcher, and therefore makes the concept of positionality an important concept to explicitly articulate in my research.

I held multiple positionalities in relation to the participants in the social context in which I undertook my research. The participants were predominantly young, black Zambians living in a large urban city in a low-income country. Demographically, the participants
were individuals mostly of Bemba or Ngoni heritage, self-identified as Christians, considered themselves to be athletes and/or sport coaches, and had worked or participated in a sport-for-development organization. Their positionalities were in contrast to me – a 30-something, female, white, English-speaking, critical occupational science researcher enrolled in a doctoral program in a high-income country with a thesis at stake. Additional positionalities that I held in relation to the participants are that of being married to a Zambian man and taking a Zambian surname, but living outside of Zambia. I am baptized as a Christian but not currently practising. I also identify as nondisabled and do not consider myself to be an athlete.

The multiple positionalities I held influenced my entire research process, including my interest in the topic, my choice of research questions, my entry into the field, how I conducted interviews and observations, what struck me in the data, my decisions about what to include and what to omit, and the kinds of stories I chose to tell and not to tell.

When considering my positionalities, I am aware that they often explicitly led me to make certain decisions along my research journey. For instance, being a doctoral student, there was an apriori assumption that the research would be largely an independent inquiry. However, as a doctoral student working with a supervisory committee, I recognize that my supervisors’ positionalities also influenced the research. This occurred through their ideas being incorporated into the work and through the way my own thinking changed following our discussions.

My positionalities also forced me to examine some of the terms and concepts that I took for granted as I tried to relate participants’ perspectives to ideas about which I am more familiar. For example, as I conducted interviews, concepts that I may not have questioned in the past about my own positionality, including my ideas around inclusion and disability, were brought to the forefront. An instance of this occurred when staff spoke of how inclusion meant providing youth with disabilities the opportunity to play on teams designated for persons with disabilities. This notion differed from my idea of inclusion, which is derived from a rights-based perspective and involves fully including persons with disabilities in activities along with their nondisabled peers.
I am also aware that there are many ways that my positionalities implicitly influenced my research. For example, even having a Zambian surname impacted my entering into the sport-for-development research field, an issue I did not initially anticipate. Upon entering a meeting with one program director, the first words said were, “Oh, you’re not black!” It was then revealed that they initially felt that my project was interesting although outside the scope of their usual research interests; however, given my Zambian surname, they thought I was a young, black, female, Zambian researcher. Those attributes fit into their belief that young Zambian women should be involved in research, so they agreed to meet with me. This mistaken identity created a space for me to introduce my ideas and allow them to explore how the research could fit within the scope of their own organization. After hearing my research goals, they agreed to become involved as they thought the findings would be meaningful and complementary to the research they were conducting. I was surprised at first to hear that the initial meeting had only been agreed to based on my surname. After some thought, I realized that I had not considered deeply enough how my own positionalities, implicitly and explicitly, influenced what I focused on, what I viewed as marginal as I carried out my research, and how those positions might affect the relationship I had with my research participants.

8 Research context

*What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?* (James, 1984, preface)

As alluded to in the above quote and identified by Sugden (2006), “those wishing to use sport to promote non-sporting social reform need first to carefully dissect the nature of the sport experience in both its natural setting and its broader social and historical context” (p. 222). In this final section, I provide details on the rationale for why Lusaka, Zambia, was chosen for the site of this research and offer insights into the social, cultural, and political economic contexts that I perceived as relevant to my study.
8.1 Rationale

The choice of Lusaka, Zambia, as the site for this research was both a strategic and personal one. Firstly, Zambia was selected because it is central to the sport-for-development movement. One of the seminal projects in the field, Education through Sport (EduSport), was established in Lusaka, Zambia, in 1999. The notion of sport-for-development has since found strong support in Zambia. The government of Zambia’s Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP) 2011–2015 includes incorporating child and youth sport to address development goals. There are also a greater number of local and international, well-established sport-for-development organizations in Zambia than among most other countries (Lindsey & Banda, 2011).

Zambia was also selected based on my review of the Zambian sport-for-development literature, which revealed a dearth of empirical evidence. Meier and Saavedra (2009) pointed this out after their review of Zambian research, grey literature, and media sources. They noted that there was close to no information on a “contemporary Zambian sportscape dominated by men’s football” (p. 1159).

There were also a number of pragmatic factors that made Zambia the appropriate place in which to carry out my doctoral research. It is the country where my extended family lives and therefore I had knowledge of the country and a place to call home while I conducted my research. As well, Zambia is a stable, English-speaking country with no civil war or crisis that could interrupt the research. Existing research partnerships were already in place. The University of Toronto had previously collaborated with the University of Zambia (UNZA) through internships for Canadian students in Zambia and scholarships for Zambian students to attend postgraduate training at the University of Toronto. This history of the University of Toronto and UNZA’s partnership in conjunction with my own personal connections, described above, built a point of entry for me into the sport-for-development field. The city of Lusaka was specifically chosen as the majority of sport-for-development NGOs operate out of that city. Because Lusaka is the capital city, it is also where the university is located, making it both a feasible and convenient location in which to conduct my research.
Finally, Zambia was selected for personal reasons. I wanted to conduct the study in Zambia because, being married to a Zambian man, I wanted to carry out research in a country that is significant to my family. As well, having support from my extended family living in Zambia significantly decreased the logistical challenges associated with global research and increased the feasibility of staying in-country for an extended period of time. I was very familiar and comfortable with the context from having spent time visiting the country on numerous occasions; and, because my spouse has been heavily involved in the sport-for-development research scene in Zambia over the past nine years, I had many acquaintances in the field and was therefore able to be quickly introduced and connected to many key actors.

8.2 Zambian context

Learning about the Zambian context was important to me for a myriad of reasons. Personally, I am part of a Zambian family and therefore wanted to learn about a country that is significant to me and my family. I also recognize that, given my positionalities, the development of my cultural knowledge is critical. I believe that researchers do not need to come from the racial or cultural community in which they conduct research; however, like Tillman (2002), I believe that it is important for researchers to possess knowledge about themselves in relationship to the researched community. Furthermore, important to a critical occupational approach is an understanding of an occupation’s context, as this is where knowledge is re/produced and it thereby influences the forms of occupation as well as related functions and meanings.

8.2.1 Social and cultural context

The Republic of Zambia is a landlocked country in southern Africa, east of Angola and northwest of Zimbabwe. Two of the country’s nine provinces are predominately urban, and the remaining seven provinces are rural with agricultural economies. Previously known as Northern Rhodesia, Zambia was a British colony until 1964 when the country gained its independence. Zambia’s official national language is English, but a large
number of languages and dialects exist within the country, and seven additional official Zambian languages are used for the purposes of circulating information (Arnett, 2007).

The country is culturally diverse with over 70 tribes; tribal animosity is minimal. Typically, one or two tribal groups live within each Zambian province and many Zambian children have parents from two different lineages (Arnett, 2007). Zambian society is collective in nature, meaning that the good of the group outweighs individual concerns (Arnett, 2007). Family life is highly valued in Zambian culture and both genders live with family members until they are married, which tends to occur in late adolescence or early adulthood (Arnett, 2007; Taylor, 2006). Extended family plays a large role in Zambia, with adults in the extended family assuming parental roles for all of the family’s children.

Christianity has been central to Zambia since its introduction in the mid-nineteenth century by European colonial explorers. In the 1991 Constitution, Zambia was declared a Christian nation, opening the door to evangelizing the nation and strengthening the acknowledgment that Christianity had a powerful force in government and politics. The majority of Zambians today identify themselves as Christian (Arnett, 2007; Colson, 2006) and are typically very active in churches. This influence of Christianity on the nation has contributed to what Mwaanga (2010) calls “evangelical sport-for-development” (p. 62). The majority of the Zambian population is Christian, but other religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Bhai, and Hinduism are also practised to a lesser extent. Many Zambians also believe in the indigenous Bantu religions, while others combine traditional and Christian religious beliefs (Folotiya, 2006).

In 2010, Zambia had a population of approximately 13.3 million people (SNDP, 2011) with approximately 46% of the population being under the age of 15 (WHO, 2010), making for a very young society. Youth often contribute to family income by helping to gather resources or care for younger siblings (Arnett, 2007). Educationally, approximately 30% of Zambian adolescents attend school, but only 10% complete secondary education and pursue higher education, with no alternative forms of occupational education provided to those who are not able to attend secondary school.
There are also significant socioeconomic and health factors that influence the lives of Zambian youth (UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, 2008; Zambia Country Profile, 2010). Many youth face numerous challenges, including poverty, hunger, illiteracy, lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, lack of shelter, and exposure to numerous epidemics (Charlton, Kawana, & Hendricks, 2009). To address the needs of Zambian youth, service provision and policy development is both heavily influenced and developed by international and civil society development organizations, and a significant number of these identify sports as part of their programming (Sport and Development, 2012).

With regard to sports, football (known as soccer in North America) was introduced to Zambia in the beginning of the 1900s by missionaries, British colonial administrators, and investors (Chipande, 2010), and therefore is not considered to be a traditional game; however, it is seen as essential to Zambian heritage and is the country’s national sport (Banda, 2010). As detailed in Walubita’s (2011) book on the Zambian sport scene, “Zambia has been caught in this soccer mania too. The sport has grown to be Zambia’s foremost game” (p. 1). Although football is highly valued in Zambia, little funding is available for national or professional teams, causing the best players to leave home to play in Europe (Darby, 2004).

### 8.2.2 Political and economic context

At the time of its independence in 1964, Zambia was the third-largest copper producer in the world and was considered to be a wealthy middle-income country. Historically, Zambia is politically known for lasting 27 years as a one-party state, opposing apartheid in South Africa, and finally returning to a multiparty democracy. Economically, Zambia has seen the decline of copper prices in the early 1970s, structural adjustment programs of the IMF and World Bank in the early 1980s, the emergence of foreign investment in Zambia's mining sector, and the attainment of the International Monetary Fund’s Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) completion point and the resultant debt relief. In 2011, Zambia was ranked a middle-income country by the World Bank as a result of the stabilization in its economy, Gross Domestic Product growth, decreasing interest rates,
and increasing levels of trade. Much of its growth is due to foreign investment in Zambia's mining sector and higher copper prices on the world market.

Since its independence, Zambia has been assisted by donors who offer technical and financial aid to implement development projects. These international development projects are the dominant mode of modern development in Zambia and neighbouring countries (Imboela, 2004). International donors have contracted NGOs to work as surrogates for services the country is unable to provide. Education accounts for the highest aid sector (27%), followed by health (19%), gender, and HIV/AIDS (both at 17%) (JASZ, 2005). In 2008, monies towards MDGs in Zambia totalled US $448.9 million, with the World Bank accounting for 24% followed by USAID at 15%. The government is well aware of its dependence on external financial assistance, as between 33% and 53% of the national budget was funded through donor contributions during the period of 1996 to 2005 (Harland, 2008).

The information provided about Zambia in this section offers important contextual information for the present study of sport-for-development, because these economic, political, cultural, and social contexts influence and are influenced by the occupations used in the sport-for-development programs. As I have argued in this chapter, bringing a critical occupational approach to sport-for-development research will add to the scholarly understanding of the phenomenon and inform policy and practice. In the following chapters, I attempt to provide such an analysis.
Chapter 2
An Occupational Perspective of Single-Occupation-Based International Development Programs

A version of this chapter has been published as a manuscript in the *Journal of Occupational Science*.

Njelesani, J., Cameron, D., & Polatajko, H. J.

1 Abstract

International organizations have been established in low income countries worldwide to fill gaps in the sectors of education, community development, and social services. Many of these organizations have chosen to focus their programming around single occupations such as soccer or music. It was the purpose of this study to determine what is known about single-occupation-based development programs in order to describe the breadth and scope of the phenomenon and what drives it. A scoping review guided by an occupational perspective was carried out. The results revealed three themes: Nature of the Occupations Being Used, Drive to Occupation Based Programming, and Hopes for Occupation Based Programming. The findings suggest that the full benefits of using occupations in international development programming appear to transcend the specific occupation used and therefore, lends support for the more widespread use of an occupational perspective when creating, implementing, and evaluating single occupation programs for international development.

2 Introduction

Since the 1980s, the number of organizations worldwide providing international development programming has risen greatly; the majority of these regard *development* as inherent to their organizational aims (World Bank, 2009). Conceptualizations of international development are highly contested; however, a leading definition refers to development as “a process of enabling people’s choices and increasing the opportunities available to all members of society” (United Nations Development Program, 2002).
Programs that align with this definition carry out development by helping low and middle-income countries create the necessary capacity needed to provide sustainable solutions to their challenges (International Development Exchange, 2010). Some of the challenges that international development programs are trying to address include; poverty, education, environment, gender equality, and health (UN, 2010).

The amorphous term international development programming covers a host of programming as both a means and end to development. A wide variety of programming exists, as the underlying development approach shapes the design and implementation of each program. Depending on the aims of the organization and the development approach, programs are quite varied. For example programs may be centered on purely economic disbursement, building of infrastructure, health service provision, or however else the organization sees fit. An emerging strategy to program delivery is the use of specific single activities or, in the language of occupational science, occupations, around which to center the programming. This phenomenon of using single occupations around which to focus international development programming is intriguing from an occupational perspective. An occupational perspective includes “examining what individuals do every day on their own and collectively; how people live and seek identity; how people organize their habits, routines and choices to promote health; and how systems support (or do not support) the occupations people want or need to do to be healthy” (Whiteford & Townsend, 2011, p. 67).

From an occupational perspective, the term occupation refers to coherent patterns of actions that are culturally named and valued, that emerge through transactions between a person and his or her environment, and that the person either wants to, needs to, or is expected to perform (CAOT, 1997; Townsend & Polatajko, 2007). Within the concept, occupations include every activity in which a person participates over the course of a day, week, month, year or life. Examples of an individual’s occupations may include such things as personal care, childcare, work, school, household maintenance and leisure activities. Examples of international development programming that is focused on single occupations include football used by Kicking AIDS Out, as a means to combat
HIV/AIDS in Zambia, and bowling, used by UNICEF, in its bowl out polio campaign in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately the literature is devoid of any analysis of these or other single occupation development programs from an occupational perspective. The bulk of discourse on occupation and international development has focused on examining the potential of occupations to address rehabilitation interventions for people living with disabilities in low and middle-income countries and the implications of this for the practice of occupational therapy (Bangirana et al., 2009; Kamba & Rugg, 2008; Seedat, Haskis, & Stein, 2008; Stickley, 2010). As the majority of the studies of occupation have focused on its use by therapists with the aim of rehabilitation or improved health, there are a dearth of examples of occupation focused practices that have gone beyond rehabilitation to build on international development principles including supporting people and facilitating communities to find sustainable solutions to their challenges. One such occupation focused practice includes the reliance on occupations to promote gender equality and socio-economic development in post-conflict Sierra Leone with war victims led by the World Rehabilitation Fund and their in-country partners (Thibeault, 2002).

A small scholarly conversation can be found on the unique contribution that occupational science might bring to international development across the world (Kronenberg, Algado, & Pollard, 2005; Kronenberg, Pollard, & Sakellariou, 2011; Watson & Swartz, 2004). This discussion is framed in relation to eliminating oppressive circumstances and occupational deprivation and enabling individuals and communities to achieve, embrace, own and realize occupational potential or capacity (Christiansen & Townsend, 2004; Jensen & Thomas, 2005). None of the scholarly conversation has addressed the phenomenon of single-occupation based international development programming and examined it with an occupational lens. Indeed, there is no comprehensive review of the phenomenon, thus little is known about the full breadth and scope of the phenomenon and what drives it.
3 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine single-occupation based international development programs in order to describe the breadth and scope of the phenomenon and what drives it.

4 Theoretical foundations

The study adopted an occupational perspective to examine what occupations have been used in international development programs and why. Using an occupational perspective enabled reflection on issues concerning the use of occupations within development because of the perspective’s concern with exploring and understanding the form, function, and meaning of occupation in context (Molke, Laliberte-Rudman, & Polatajko, 2004).

5 Methods

A scoping study was undertaken to examine the phenomenon of single-occupation based development programming. A modified method of a scoping review, as described by Arksey and O’Malley (2005) was carried out. The basic framework of a scoping review is similar to other types of literature reviews (e.g., meta-analysis and systematic), in that the research question is identified, relevant studies are found, and studies are scrutinized for inclusion and exclusion. However, scoping review methodology differs from other types of reviews as the criteria for exclusion and inclusion are not based on the quality of the studies, but on relevance, hence, the methodological quality of the reviewed literature is not evaluated. Scoping studies traditionally examine the “extent, range and nature of research activity” (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005, p. 21); however, this study was modified to include literature outside of empirical literature including theoretical and grey literature, as it was assumed that the majority of information available on the topic would not emerge from research studies.
Three search strategies were used to enhance the breadth and validity of the information found. The first strategy was a review of the published empirical and theoretical literature. Literature was identified by using Scholars Portal and OVID to search the electronic databases of; CINAHL, Dissertations International, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, PAIS International, Web of Science, and CIRRIE (all until October Week 1 2010), using MeSH headings and free text key words that were applicable to the areas of interest of occupation and international development. Specifically, the electronic search terms used in combinations using the Boolean operators ‘AND’ and ‘OR’ were: occupation, activity, development program, development project, international development, development aid, and NGO. No methodological limitations were applied to screen for levels of evidence; therefore, all types of papers were accepted including; research papers, expert opinions, case studies and reviews. All of the texts were accessed via a major university’s libraries and databases. Reference Manager was used to file and manage the retrieved papers.

The second strategy was contacting key informants through email, to request publications or grey literature they might be aware of related to the study’s purpose. Informants included members of the International Society of Occupational Science, international development program directors and officers, and university faculty members who are experts in occupational science and/or international development. Finally, websites of various governments and relevant organizations known to the research team and suggested by key informants were hand searched for relevant grey literature, including publicly available pamphlets, reports, program evaluations, and newsletters.

Copies of the retrieved abstracts, reports, articles, and text were reviewed using the following inclusion/exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria: documents that explicitly addressed the use of occupations in international development programming. Documents were included that addressed international development programming occurring in any country. Along with this criterion, documents were included if they were accessible to the first author and only if they were published in the English language between 1995 and October 2010 in order to preserve the accuracy and currency of the information that was under analysis. Exclusion criteria included: failure to address both concepts of occupation
and international development programming, used a differing meaning for the terms occupation (e.g., military occupation, employment) or development (e.g., self-development as used in the concept ‘theatre for development’), or were focused on occupational therapy interventions. Documents were also excluded if they were a review of a book or of another article included in the search. Initially the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to the abstract, summary or table of contents of the literature. Following the initial exclusion of documents, all of the remaining documents were reviewed in their entirety.

For all relevant documents, key items of information were charted, which is a technique for “synthesizing and interpreting qualitative data by sifting, charting and sorting material according to key issues and themes” (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005, p. 15). Key information entered into the data charting form included the author(s), year of publication, document’s purpose, methods, context, theoretical framework, occupations of focus (e.g., what occupations they were incorporating), and results/outcomes/indicators. Together, this information formed the basis of analysis, including basic numerical analysis of the extent, nature and distribution of the literature reviewed, and thematic analysis to identify the patterns (themes) within the data.

5.1 Documents reviewed

The combined search strategies yielded a total of 956 documents, of these 893 publications were from the electronic databases search, eleven publications from the key informants, and 52 were identified in the internet search. Following the review of article and thesis abstracts, and grey literature table of contents, 66 documents met the inclusion criteria for full-text review, which consisted of 23 peer reviewed articles, four doctoral theses, three masters theses, and 36 grey literature documents. The largest number of documents excluded from the review was due to the differing use of the terms occupation or development or because the articles focused on occupational therapy interventions. After reading the full-text, 55 documents were retained to be included in the review, including 17 peer reviewed articles, four doctoral theses, three masters theses, and 31 grey literature documents.
6 Findings

6.1 Breadth and scope

The literature on single-occupation centered international development programs has grown steadily since the late 1990s, with the largest growth from 2005. The majority of the literature that was found was not based on empirical evidence, but rather was anecdotal or written in a rhetoric tone by organizations delivering the programs. Of the anecdotal evidence, by far the most common type of document was a descriptive report on occupations used. The terms activity, game, and practice were most frequently cited to describe the occupations used from the literature outside of occupational science, whereas occupational scientists did refer to the term occupation explicitly. For the research papers, the bulk of papers originated from the UK and Canada, were authored by sport sociologists and addressed how sports have been used in low income countries in development and peace efforts. In contrast, countries where the programs occurred and where the research was conducted had many fewer publications. The methods used in the research publications varied, but qualitative descriptive methods prevailed. Most of the documents did not identify use of any theory or underlying theoretical framework for choosing the particular occupation used. Notable exceptions were papers written by sports sociologists who predominantly used critical social science perspectives.

The 55 documents revealed information in three categories of interest: Nature of the Occupations Being Used, Drive to Occupation-based Programming, and Hopes of Occupation-based Programming.

6.2 Nature of the occupations being used

The Nature of the Occupations Being Used theme details what occupations the programs incorporated and was identified from the data charting form column that described the activities of the organizations involved.
A number of occupations emerged: the most widely cited occupations that were explicitly chosen for delivering development programming were found to be sports occupations. Sports occupations were conceived, explained, understood, and practiced in a variety of different ways in the literature, but were most commonly described as, “all types of organized physical activity that may serve as a tool for development and peace” (Levermore, 2009, p. 33).

The next most widely cited type were occupations used in micro credit programs. Micro credit programs involve the distribution of small interest loans to people living in poverty with the aim of promoting gender equality and empowerment amongst women (Grameen Bank, 2009). The occupations that were identified were commonly grouped together as entrepreneurial activities and included a variety of occupations such as sewing clothes, beadwork, pottery or cooking. Although an abundance of literature exists on micro credit programs, the majority of the literature did not address explicitly how the use of the occupations led to its outcomes or if different occupations lead to better outcomes than others.

In addition to sports and entrepreneurial activities, occupations included were: those in the realms of art, theater, music, dance, and technology. As an example, the organization Purple Images has used dance successfully as a development strategy in Kenya. Another example is the program operated by the Oke-Ogun Community Development Network in Nigeria, which combines household management and technology in their solar cooking program.

6.3 Drive to occupation based programming

The second theme describes why the particular occupations identified in the first theme were selected for use. This theme was identified using key information from the theoretical framework and context components in the data charting form.

Occupations used in development were selected for use based on the varying assumptions that they are universal (e.g., theatre), or are culturally relevant (e.g., capeoria), or will provide positive self-development or life skills (e.g., computer use). Among the various
nature of occupations used, sports occupations were often selected for use based on their practicality and cost-effective qualities. Occupations selected for use in micro credit programs were chosen based on a set of different rationale, including their ability to generate revenue in efforts to fight poverty and also for their cultural familiarity in that program participants already had the necessary skills to perform the activities.

6.4 Hopes of occupation based programming

*Hopes of Occupation Based Programming* describes the benefits the programs hope to achieve by using the particular occupations and was identified using the results/outcomes/indicators key information from the data charting form.

A lack of peer-reviewed studies were found that describe the explicit benefit/hopes of the occupations used; however, significant anecdotal evidence was found, which connects a wide range of occupations to international development goals. For instance, the program El Sistema in Venezuela, trains youth in a classical music orchestra as a means for social action, the Museums of Malawi project in Malawi aims to combat HIV/AIDS and malaria through the lens of culture, and Playing for Peace operates in Israel and uses basketball to bring together groups from different ethnic backgrounds as a peace building effort. Further identified expected benefits of using sporting occupations included improved physical fitness, improved health, improved mental health and psychological well being, socio-psychological benefits, as well as broader sociological impacts including increased community identity, social coherence and integration. The hopes of micro credit programs included raising an individual’s economic status, lessening dependency on husband’s wealth and improving the homes and lives of families, through programs such as the YMCA in the Gambia which teaches women how to make the local tye and dye Batik cloth.

7 Discussion

The purpose of this scoping review was to describe the breadth and scope and rationale of single-occupation based international development programs. It is evident that
international development organizations with various underlying development approaches from health prevention to poverty reduction to social action are using occupations as a means in their programming. These programs are occurring in low income countries across the world and incorporate a range of occupations, with the majority being sport. It was also found that the aim of using occupations ranged from the development of specific skill sets at the individual level to broader impacts at the meso-level as seen through projects that enhance community identity. However, the results of our review yielded a dearth of evidence based literature to support these notions; the majority of the literature being anecdotal. Explanations for the high prevalence of anecdotal literature included that there are no theoretical models (e.g., an occupational model) driving the selection of occupations used in the majority of the programming; therefore, making it difficult to design research. Further explanations for the lack of research may include the ‘black box’ phenomena, which is the space between the input and output of programs (program activities) that is rarely described (Stame, 2004). Another possible explanation for the poorly articulated or lack of robust evidence on the use of specific occupations is the recognition that the precise nature of an activity’s contribution, either theoretically or practically, is very difficult to produce. Furthermore, there are many challenges associated with carrying out research in this area particularly as resource allocation for international development programs tends to be limited, there is a lack of research training, time, and support for research in low income countries, and there is a limited understanding of research methods to examine the use of occupations in international development.

Despite the wealth of hopes expressed with using occupations in development programs, the costs of using occupations or the potential for occupations being detrimental, as their value is dependent on context, was less abundant. In the literature it was revealed that a large majority of development programs use the modern occupations of football, basketball, and volleyball, which may not reflect traditional social structures and practices, and therefore could contribute to the death of traditional activities and lead to an undermining of cultural factors. Furthermore, despite the many hoped for benefits of incorporating occupations into international development programming, from an occupational perspective it must be understood that occupations are not inherently
positive or negative, as any activity has the potential for being both as its value is dependent on context. Therefore, it is important to realize that any occupation incorporated into programming if not thoughtfully implemented, may be detrimental.

Though this review found limited research addressing the benefit of using a single-occupation focus in international development, the literature conveyed a strong belief in the benefit of engaging in specific activities as a means of delivering international development programs. While, benefits to engaging in specific occupations were found, from an occupational perspective it appears that there are also benefits that transcend the specific occupation. For example, many of the single-occupation based programs argued common hopes or benefits for the use of their specific occupations, including physical, psychological, and social benefits. A review of the literature on the benefits of sports edited by Kidd & Donnelly (2008), found that the psychological and social benefits appear to be an indirect outcome of context and social interaction rather than a direct outcome of participating in sports, which lends support to the use of more widespread occupations in development work. The idea that the benefits appear to transcend the specific occupation reflects and provides support for the adoption of an occupational perspective in considering single-occupation programs. The idea of benefits transcending specific occupations also endorses the concept of using a greater breadth of occupations in development, in order to enable people’s choices and increase opportunities for all.

7.1 Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. First, due to the lack of consistent terminology, it is possible that some documents were missed that used alternate terms to capture program activities/occupations. Second, due to the global and interdisciplinary nature of the topic, documents may also have been missed that were published in journals not included in the electronic databases searched or were written in languages other than English. Specifically in regards to the internet search, there are limitations associated with the lack of permanence and number of publications posted on-line of the web sites searched, as some web sites did not appear to be heavily populated with information. This may be a reflection of the resources available within the organizations to post information.
on their sites. Finally, as the inclusion criteria only included literature that explicitly linked the use of occupations to international development programs, we would assume that there are a large number of organizations using occupations implicitly to achieve their development aims, but which is not discussed and therefore were not included in this review.

7.2 Future research

The dearth of literature leaves many avenues open for future research. The research must not only describe the use of occupations in development but also critically examine how the occupations are implemented and the fit of the occupations to their context. Thus an important focus of future work will be to advance an occupational perspective in understanding of the use of occupations in international development.

8 Conclusion

There has been an increase in the use of single-occupation focused international development programming. Grounded in an occupational perspective this review has shown that the growth of this phenomenon, for the most part, to be guided by rhetoric, not empiricism and to have emerged in the absence of an occupational lens. The examination sheds light on the gaps resulting from the lack of use of an occupational perspective and suggests that the full benefits of using occupations appear to transcend the specific occupation used and therefore, lends support for the more widespread use of an occupational perspective when creating, implementing, and evaluating occupation-based programs for international development.
Chapter 3
Articulating an Occupational Perspective

A version of this chapter has been published as a manuscript in the *Journal of Occupational Science*.

Njelesani, J., Tang, A., Jonsson, H., & Polatajko, H.

1 Abstract

Within the field of occupational science the term *occupational perspective* is widely used to guide research. However, when the term is used it is often not defined. To address the need for a common understanding that will enhance clarity and make theoretical understandings explicit a scoping review of the definitional literature was conducted. It was determined that definitional clarity was necessary. This paper proposes a new definition: an occupational perspective is a way of looking at or thinking about patterns of doing. The proposed definition is based on how the term has been defined within the literature and addresses the gaps in previous definitions.

2 Introduction

Occupational scientists use theoretical and conceptual perspectives to frame their research. The theoretical and conceptual clarity of that research comes from the scientists’ understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of their work and the ability to explicitly describe the theory used. A lack of theoretical clarity may make it difficult for readers to interpret and apply the research findings. Within occupational science, the term *occupational perspective* is widely used to guide research. However, the term is seldom explicitly defined; and the definitions that are provided differ across authors. The purpose of the work reported here was to bring clarity to the use of this important concept. We explored how the term *occupational perspective* has been defined within the literature, identified commonalities, differences and gaps, and concluded a new definition was needed. We constructed a new definition based on common constructs of the term as found in the literature. We hope this will provide a clear conceptual base for occupational
scientists to frame their work, thereby strengthening the foundation for knowledge development in the science and enabling readers to understand the perspective in which the research is situated and interpret the research findings.

3 Methods

A scoping literature review based on the methods described by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) was conducted to explore how the term occupational perspective is defined within the literature. Two search strategies were used to enhance the breadth of the information found. The first strategy was to review the published empirical and theoretical literature. Relevant published literature was identified by searching the electronic databases of Scholars Portal, CINAHL (Ebsco), Wilson’s Database (Interdisciplinary), Dissertations International and SCOPUS (all from June Week 1 1950 until June Week 1 2011). The search was conducted using the electronic search term, occupational perspective. No methodological limitations were applied to screen for levels of evidence; therefore, all types of documents were accepted including peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed articles, books, dissertations, and book chapters. This yielded 85 documents. Based on the assumption that the majority of literature would be published in the fields of occupational therapy or occupational science, the second strategy was to hand search occupational therapy and occupational science journals and textbooks known to the authors. This yielded an additional 9 documents. All of the texts were accessed via The University of Toronto’s libraries and databases. Microsoft Excel was used to file and manage the retrieved documents.

All retrieved documents (94) were then screened for inclusion for review using the following inclusion/exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria: documents that contained the search term at least once within the title and/or as a keyword and/or within the body of the text, were published in English, in any country, in any year, and were accessible to the authors. Exclusion criteria were: documents that contained the term therapy inserted between occupational and perspective (viz. occupational therapy perspective) and documents that were a review of a book or another article already included in the search.
Initially the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to titles, abstracts, tables of contents and indexes. Through this process, 26 articles were excluded including four book reviews, one document that contained the term occupational therapy perspective, four documents not written in English and 17 that were not accessible to the authors. The remaining 68 documents were read in full to ensure that the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the entire document. At this stage another 10 documents were excluded due to the search term not appearing within the document. Finally, 58 documents were retained to be included in the review, comprising 41 peer-reviewed articles, 2 non-peer reviewed articles, 8 doctoral theses, 1 master’s thesis, and 6 books.

For all 58, documents, key information was extracted and entered into an electronic excel spreadsheet, including: title, source and year of publication; the authors’ names, educational background and associated discipline; the country and type of institution with which the authors were associated; the content foci; the document type (e.g., article, thesis or book) and, where appropriate, the research methodology (e.g., qualitative, quantitative) and methods. The definitions of the term occupational perspective found within the documents were also entered into the spreadsheet. Together, this information formed the basis for our analyses, which included basic counts for descriptive information, and content analysis to identify the key constructs in the definitions/descriptions of the term occupational perspective. The content analysis involved reading through the definitions or descriptions found and assigning inductive codes to the definitions/descriptions. These codes were then categorized into key constructs.

3.1 Documents description

The 58 documents included in this review consisted of 43 articles, 9 theses, and 6 books, written primarily by individuals employed at/associated with a university (55), the majority of whom were occupational therapists (37) who hold a doctoral degree (22). None of the 55 authors were particularly prolific on the topic; having at most 2 publications of relevance. The 43 articles were mainly published in journals from; Australia (13), Canada (10), USA (8) or a Scandinavian country (5). Most of the articles
were peer-reviewed (41) and were published in occupational therapy (21) or occupational science (11) journals.

4 Findings

4.1 Range and scope

The term *occupational perspective* first appeared in 1953 within the political science literature, in an article reporting on the social tensions among businessmen and bureaucrats. Although not explicitly defined, the term occupational perspective encompassed the nature of occupation as it related to paid work (Lane, 1953). The idea that an occupational perspective only encompassed the nature of occupation as it related to paid work was used by researchers from a broad range of disciplines including business, economics, sociology, psychology, journalism, statistics, tourism, criminology, and geography. This application of the term occupational perspective continued from 1953 to the mid-1990s. It was not till 1996 that the term was first used to refer to occupations other than paid work and this occurred in the occupational science and therapy literature. That year both Kendall (1996) and Hocking (1996) used the term to frame their research with adults preparing for retirement (Kendall, 1996) and entering long-term care (Hocking, 1996), respectively. Elizabeth Townsend (1997) was the first to explicitly define the term: “a perspective attending to other forms, nature, locations, processes, and other features of occupation as people interact in the context of their environment” (p. 20). From the mid-1990s on, the term began to be used increasingly in the occupational science and occupational therapy literature. The majority of documents using the term were published after the year 2005 (n=32), presumably as a result of the inception of occupational science as a discipline in the last decade of the 20th century. Within the occupational science and occupational therapy literature, there was no consensus about whether an occupational perspective is specific to the profession of occupational therapy, as seen in the following definition, “an occupational perspective refers to a body of knowledge developed in the literature of occupational therapy” (Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005, p. 572) or whether it is a worldview concept that transcends occupational therapy practice contexts, as described by Whiteford (2000);
“Using an occupational perspective was seen to be applicable to exploring a wide scope of phenomena, not those only concerned with occupational therapy practice” (p. 203).

In regards to how the term was used, of the documents examined, 43 used the term only in the title or the abstract and did not elucidate the meaning of the term in any way. Of the remaining, 10 provided their own definition and 5 cited a definition from another source (see Table 3.1). Amongst the cited definitions, no single source predominated. Given that less than one quarter of the articles provided any definition of the term, and the lack of consistency between the definitions provided, we proceeded to examine the underlying constructs associated with the use of the term.

Table 3.1  Occupational perspective definitions

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<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Created by document authors</th>
<th>Cited from another source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Townsend, 1997</td>
<td>“A perspective attending to other forms, nature, locations, processes, and other features of occupation as people interact in the context of their environment” (p. 20).</td>
<td>“Each feature is discussed from an occupational perspective, the active process of occupying ourselves is the way we learn about our bodies, minds, and spirits as we proceed through life” (p. 20). From Bateson, M.C. (1994). Peripheral visions: Learning along the way. New York: Harper Collins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilcock, 1998</td>
<td>“A particular view of health from the perspective of humans as occupational beings” (p. 97).</td>
<td>None indicated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whiteford, 2000</td>
<td>“An occupational perspective is a requisite to considering the occupational needs of people as individuals and within society, separately from consideration of how these can be met through the provision of therapeutic interventions” (p. 203).</td>
<td>“To view the world through occupational eyes, seeing phenomena that have previously been viewed from other perspectives (for example, medical, psychological and social) as essentially occupational phenomena” (p. 203). From</td>
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Wilcock, 2001

“An occupational perspective does not provide a prescriptive programme of therapy. It does provide a way of thinking in whatever area of practice you pursue; a way to consider individual and community needs; a way to approach individuals, families, communities, doctors, bureaucrats and politicians; and a way to enable health through occupation” (p. 417).

Davis, 2004

“The occupational perspective draws no such artificial boundaries between paid work and unpaid work, or the occupations of the workplace and those of daily life. As occupation-oriented therapists, we understand the role that various forms of occupation, including paid work, play in people’s lives, and the centrality of occupation to health and well-being. We believe that the meaning and purpose of people’s occupations can only be completely understood when viewed in the context of their unfolding lives and the other occupations they perform” (p. 19).

Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005

“Refers to a body of knowledge developed in the literature of occupational therapy … An occupational perspective focuses on the ordinary things that people do and occupational aspects of importance for health and development … Important aspects of an occupational perspective include: 1) The subjective experience of meaning, 2) The subjective experience of autonomy and self-determination 3) The complex interrelationships between different kinds of occupation” (p. 572).

Laliberte Rudman, Hebert, & Reid, 2005

“A comprehensive understanding of occupation and its enablement demands that we take on the responsibility of conducting research framed within an occupational perspective” (p. 150).

Fok, Shaw, Jennings, & None indicated

“Thus, an occupational perspective entails a detailed description of the
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<th>Summary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cheesman, 2009</td>
<td><strong>Occupation itself, the requirements and demands, the available resources to support individuals or groups, and the work contexts (e.g. workplace)” (p. 370).</strong> From Shaw, L. &amp; Lysaght, R. (2008). Cognitive and behavioural demands of work. In K. Jacobs, Ergonomics for Therapists, (3rd edition) (pp. 103-122). Missouri: Elsevier.</td>
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<td>Kirsh et al., 2009</td>
<td>“A belief in occupational engagement as a basic need and a determinant of health and quality of life” (p. 393).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huot &amp; Laliberte Rudman, 2011</td>
<td>“An occupational perspective involves highlighting how occupations are connected with doing, being, becoming and belonging, whether implicitly or explicitly. The incorporation of being and becoming into an occupational perspective emerged from Wilcock’s (1998a, 1998b) scholarship, which extends the notion of occupation beyond the ‘doing’ of purposeful or goal-directed activities to address individuals’ past, current and anticipated sense of self” (p. 69).</td>
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<td>Pettican &amp; Prior, 2011</td>
<td>None indicated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whiteford &amp; Townsend, 2011</td>
<td>“An occupational perspective includes examining what individuals do every day on their own and collectively; how people live and seek identity; how people organize their habits, routines, and choices to promote health; and how systems support (or do not support) the occupations people want or need to do to be healthy” (p. 67).</td>
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None indicated
4.2 Differing constructs of an occupational perspective

Our analysis revealed that the definitions provided differ markedly from one another. The first point of difference was whether an occupational perspective is situated at the micro-level (individual) or at a more macro-level (society at large). For example, Hemmingsson and Jonsson (2005) stressed that, “important aspects of an occupational perspective include: 1) The subjective experience of meaning, 2) The subjective experience of autonomy and self-determination” (p. 572). Their emphasis on the meaning of the occupation at the level of the individual is congruent with the biopsychosocial model (e.g., International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) that guides their research. In comparison, Whiteford and Townsend (2011) view an occupational perspective as related to the broader societal context, “an occupational perspective includes examining what individuals do every day on their own and collectively; how people live and seek identity; how people organize their habits, routines, and choices to promote health; and how systems support (or do not support) the occupations people want or need to do to be healthy” (p. 67).

Another way many of the terms differed was in how the term perspective was defined. Townsend (1997) characterized the term perspective using the words, view and eye, which is in line with the definition provided by the Oxford Dictionary (2012): “A particular attitude towards or way of regarding something; a point of view”. However, other authors used the term belief in their description of an occupational perspective. For example, Kirsch et al. (2009) refer to an occupational perspective as, “a belief in occupational engagement as a basic need and a determinant of health and quality of life” (p. 393). The word belief is defined in the Oxford Dictionary (2012) as “the acceptance that something exists or is true without evidence”.

4.3 Key common constructs of an occupational perspective

Given the broad range of definitions, a content analysis was conducted to explore the commonalities across the use of the term. The analysis revealed that the following common dimensions were associated with an occupational perspective: it encompasses
individuals through to societal doing; considers contextual factors; assumes occupations are connected to health and well-being; attends to the form, function, and meaning of occupations; and can contribute to being, becoming, and belonging.

4.4 Individual through to societal doing

The term occupational perspective was commonly used to describe a way of looking at the act of doing from the micro-level (individual) to the macro-level (society at large). The following quotes illustrate the broad range of needs considered; “a way to consider individual and community needs; a way to approach individuals, families, communities, doctors, bureaucrats and politicians” (Wilcock, 2001, p. 417) and “considering the occupational needs of people as individuals and within society” (Whiteford, 2000, p. 203).

4.5 Contextual factors

Consideration of the context in which occupations are situated appeared to be inherent to an occupational perspective. Not only were people seen to, “interact in the context of their environment” (Townsend, 1997, p. 20), but the influence that occupation has on the context and vice versa was seen to be important when taking an occupational perspective as illustrated in the following, “We believe that the meaning and purpose of people’s occupations can only be completely understood when viewed in the context of their unfolding lives and the other occupations they perform” (Davis, 2004) and “An occupational perspective is a requisite to considering the occupational needs of people as individuals and within society” (Whiteford, 2000, p. 203).

4.6 Occupations are connected to health and well-being

Examination of the ways the term was applied revealed that an occupational perspective encompasses a common assumption that occupation is “a way to approach individuals, families, communities, doctors, bureaucrats and politicians; and a way to enable health through occupation” (Wilcock, 2001, p. 417) and “occupational aspects of importance for health and development” (Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005, p. 572). That is occupation is
seen as central to, important for, and as a determinant, promoter and enabler of health. Wilcock (1998) further connected health and occupation when she argued that the two are inseparable and described an occupational perspective to be “a particular view of health from the perspective of humans as occupational beings” (p.97).

4.7 Includes all types of form, function, and meaning

The need for an occupational perspective to bring about an understanding to the form, function, and meaning of occupations was inherent across many definitions. This understanding is congruent with the identified focus of occupational science being, “the form, function and meaning of daily activities” (Larson and Zemke, 2003, p. 80). Specifically, common across the uses of the term was the idea that an occupational perspective includes all different forms of doing (e.g., engagement in purposeful occupations), as captured in the following; “The occupational perspective draws no such artificial boundaries between paid work and unpaid work, or the occupations of the workplace and those of daily life” (Davis, 2004) and “the complex interrelationships between different kinds of occupation” (Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005, p. 572). Townsend’s 1997 definition highlights the importance of the perspective to understanding both the form and functions of occupation, “a perspective attending to other forms, nature, locations, processes, and other features of occupation as people interact in the context of their environment” (p. 20). Furthermore, George et al. (2001) identified the need for an occupational perspective to bring about an understanding to the meaning of occupations through their definition, “to learn the meaning of occupation for an individual” (p. 460).

4.8 Contribute to being, becoming, and belonging

In addition to including different forms, functions and meanings of occupations, the need to examine more than just engagement in occupations was also identified, as captured in Huot and Rudman’s (2011) description that, “an occupational perspective involves highlighting how occupations are connected with doing, being, becoming, and belonging” (p. 69). This idea of extending occupation beyond the doing to address
individuals’ past, current and anticipated sense of self, emerged from Wilcock’s research (2007) into how belonging is the contextual element of the connectedness of people to each other as they engage in occupation. Doing and becoming have also been identified as fundamental to an occupational perspective where doing was used synonymously with the term occupation and becoming encompassed the future-oriented aspect of occupation (Gewurtz & Kirsh, 2006).

4.9 Gaps in the use of the term occupational perspective

Upon analyzing how the term occupational perspective is used in the literature, there appears to exist a dominant perspective that only occupations that are health promoting should be explored. For instance, Whiteford and Townsend (2011) incorporated the phrases “to promote health” and “to be healthy” in their description of an occupational perspective as “how people organize their habits, routines, and choices to promote health; and how systems support (or do not support) the occupations people want or need to do to be healthy” (p. 67), thus conveying the idea that only health promoting occupations should be examined. However, as noted in the occupational science literature, not all occupations contribute to well-being and health. Illustrating that point, one study of young people involved in gangs in Los Angeles, United States explored some occupations considered to be harmful (Snyder, Clark, Masunaka-Noriega, & Young, 1998). Polatajko et al. (2007) emphasized that “occupations can be ‘maladaptive’, even harmful, either to the individual or society, examples include self-abusing behavior, vandalism, arson, or illegal drug use. Many people are engaged in risky, unhealthy or even illegal and illicit occupations, which can undermine health, well-being, and justice” (p. 22). The idea that there is a reciprocal connection between engagement in occupation and an individual’s health is supported by Mozley (2001), who highlighted the need to examine the connection between mental health and occupation.
5 Discussion

5.1 Bringing together an occupational perspective

As the majority of the literature that uses the term occupational perspective, since the 1990s, is written by and for occupational scientists and therapists, the concept needs to be positioned within these disciplines. Therefore, as occupational scientists, we propose the following definition of an occupational perspective: a way of looking at or thinking about patterns of doing. This definition is congruent with the Oxford dictionary’s (2012) definition of a perspective as “a particular attitude towards or way of regarding something; a point of view”. Additionally, in incorporating the idea of looking or thinking, it shows that an action (e.g., regarding something) is taking place. Our use of the construct ‘perspective’ is also congruent with how we discovered others have used the term in their definitions of an occupational perspective. The choice of the words patterns of doing reflects that this perspective is focused on occupation, which is the underlying core construct included in each reviewed definition. The focus on doing also highlights what distinguishes an occupational perspective from other perspectives. For example, examining a person riding public transit from an occupational perspective might address how the person is occupationally engaged, whereas using a social perspective might focus on interpersonal actions that are occurring, while a gender perspective could look at how and why men and women experience public transit differently. In comparison to previously used definitions of an occupational perspective, this definition does not go beyond the core concept of occupation.

Based on our definition, it is assumed that individuals bring their own occupational perspective, which holds their definition, assumptions, and models/theories about occupation; therefore, the specifics of each perspective may differ but under our definition each would be using an occupational perspective. Having this primary definition of an occupational perspective would enable occupational scientists to recognize when a person is using an occupational perspective, while also requiring an explicit statement of their underlying assumptions, given the large range of possibilities an occupational perspective could hold. For example, the definition of occupation
underlying the occupational perspective to which we subscribe is, “groups of activities, which are named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture” (CAOT, 1997, p. 3). We choose this definition of occupation, as it is congruent with our definition of an occupational perspective and makes clear the assumptions underlying our perspective. These assumptions were derived from the common constructs and the identified gaps in the previous uses of the term, and include:

- occupations are connected to doing;
- the connections between occupations and doing relate to health and well-being;
- occupations hold form, function, and meaning from the individual to society;
- doing can contribute to being, becoming, and belonging; and
- occupations occur within a particular context and time, where occupation and context are reciprocal influence.

Within the assumptions, the specific reference to connections between occupation and health and well-being is intended to imply both a reciprocal relationship and that health is neither assumed to be positive or negative. This assumption that not all occupations promote health derives from the gaps we identified in the existing definitions of an occupational perspective.

6 Conclusion

The majority of the literature included in this scoping review uses the term occupational perspective as though there is a common understanding of the term; however, our review did not support that assumption. No single definition has, to date, prevailed. To address the need for a common understanding, this paper proposes that an occupational perspective be defined as a way of looking at or thinking about patterns of doing. The underlying assumptions incorporate a connection to doing that contributes to being, becoming, and belonging; a relationship with health and well-being; containing form,
function, and meaning from individual to societal levels; and a transactional relationship with the context.

The proposed definition and assumptions are based on how the term has been previously defined within the literature and also addresses the gaps in previous definitions. Adoption of this definition will provide a common understanding of the term occupational perspective, thereby enhancing the clarity of future theoretical and empirical endeavors.
Chapter 4
Towards a Critical Occupational Approach to Research

A version of this chapter is under review as a manuscript for the *International Qualitative Journal of Methods*.

Njelesani, J., Gibson, B. E., Nixon, S., Cameron, D., & Polatajko, H.

1 Abstract

Critical approaches to research are becoming increasingly more prevalent but occupational science and critical approaches have not been explicitly combined into one approach despite the potential to enrich the understanding of the assumptions and ideologies underlying human activity. In this paper we outline an approach to research that is mutually informed by occupational and critical social science perspectives. The *critical occupational approach* we describe can be used to explore the assumptions and ideologies underlying human activity, the ways in which knowledge is re/produced through engagement in occupation, who controls knowledge production, the mechanisms of how occupations are taken up, and who stands to gain or lose. We discuss the implications and considerations for generating research purposes, methods, and conducting analyses, and illustrate the use of the approach through a case study. We conclude this paper with consideration of the wider uses and implications of a critical occupational approach within health and social research.

2 Introduction

In this paper we describe a critical occupational approach to research. This approach draws on the fields of critical social science and occupational science in order to locate occupation as a *site of knowledge production* i.e., active political sites where meanings are generated and contested. This paper draws on our experience of using this critical occupational approach in a recent qualitative study to explore how knowledge is produced and reproduced when people engage in occupations.
In this article we provide a description of occupational and critical social science perspectives and how these perspectives are combined to develop a critical occupational approach. We then use a case study to illustrate various components of the approach and explain the approach in practical terms. We conclude with a discussion about the wider implications of a critical occupational approach for studies that examine occupations.

3 What is an occupational perspective?

An occupational perspective is defined as “a way of looking at or thinking about patterns of doing” (Njelesani, Tang, Jonsson, & Polatajko, 2012, p. 8). In this definition, doing in the phrase patterns of doing is synonymous with the word occupation, and reflects the idea of doing or engaging in activities. The term occupation refers to groups of activities, which are named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture (CAOT, 1997). Occupations include every activity in which a person participates over the course of a day, week, month, year, or life (e.g., personal care, childcare, work, school, household maintenance, and leisure activities). An occupational perspective assumes people’s doings have purpose and meaning from the micro-level (individual) to the macro-level (society at large), and these doings must be considered in relation to the context in which they are situated.

Research that uses an occupational perspective is conducted to generate knowledge about the form, function, and meaning of human occupations (Yerxa et al., 1989). This perspective assumes that occupations have many forms, functions, and meanings. Accordingly, occupations could be seen as health and wellness promoting or harmful. An occupational perspective is unique because the unit of analysis is occupation, and the research that uses this perspective focuses on how specific occupations are described and understood. An occupational perspective has been used to study the settlement process of Indian immigrant women settling in New Zealand (Nayar, Hocking, & Giddings, 2012), work integration for people with brain injuries, mental illness, and intellectual disabilities (Kirsh et al., 2009), nature of occupation at end of life (Park Lala & Kinsella, 2011a), and occupational transitions to retirement (Jonsson, Josephsson, & Kielhofner, 2001).
The study of occupation has generally been conducted in the fields of occupational therapy and occupational science; however, a broad range of disciplines study people’s everyday occupations. The disciplines of health science, business, economics, sociology, psychology, criminology, geography, and journalism have all examined the occupational nature of human beings and the impact of occupation. For example, in a review of the sport sociology literature, Kidd and Donnelly (2007) examined the benefits of participation in sport activities for young people enrolled in sport-for-development and peace programs. They found that in addition to the obvious impact on physical fitness participants also described the social benefits of sports and benefits as a result of the context in which the sports occurred. These physical and social benefits of participation in sport activities related to their context are consistent with the multidimensional (i.e., dimensions of the person, occupation, and environment) nature of occupation (Yerxa et al., 1989).

An occupational perspective helps us understand which occupations are selected, who is engaged in these occupations, and the context of these occupations. It does not, however, address why certain occupations persist, whose interests they serve, and the assumptions that underpin their ongoing acceptance. In addition, an occupational perspective is not well suited for examining the social, economic, and political forces within which occupations are situated and by which they are shaped. Lessons for addressing these areas of inquiry may be drawn from a critical social science perspective.

4 What is a critical social science perspective?

Critical social science is a term that applies to a vast field of theory and research that deals with social transformation, equity, and social justice (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). A critical social science perspective involves reflexive questions that can be used to address the implicit assumptions and ideologies underlying the social condition. Critical perspectives examine the role of power, the presence of contradictions, and the dialectical relationship between theory and practice (Eakin, Robertson, Poland, Coburn, & Edwards, 1996).
For Kincheloe and McLaren (2005), a critical social science perspective views knowledge as socially situated, and power and knowledge as inextricably linked. This approach assumes certain groups in society (e.g., related to class, race, gender, ability etc.) are more privileged than other groups, and are interconnected.

Researchers who use a critical social science perspective may be viewed as detectives searching for new and interconnected ways of understanding how power and oppression shape everyday human experiences. Critical social science researchers “are never satisfied with merely increasing knowledge” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 305); rather, they also attempt to expose the contradictions in society accepted by the dominant culture as natural in order to confront injustices in society. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2005), a critical social science perspective is appropriate for researchers who use their work as a form of social or cultural criticism. It enables researchers to question why particular social structures exist, what keeps them in place, and whose interests they serve.

The use of a critical social science perspective in qualitative research has grown over the past 20 years. For example, in the field of physical therapy, Gibson and Teachman (2012) used this perspective to examine how the dominant social assumptions about the value of walking are reflected in rehabilitation practices and the effect of these assumptions on parents and children. In the fields of education and sociology, Berman and Tyyska (2011) used this perspective to examine the ownership of language translated by interpreters in a research project that examined immigrant women’s English acquisition. In one additional example, Conrad’s (2004) use of a critical social science perspective to examine at-risk youth’s perceptions of their engagement in risky behaviors, uncovered a counter-narrative to the taken-for-granted concepts of at-risk and deviance. A critical social science perspective has also been used in the field of occupational science, as will be discussed in the next section.
5 How occupation research has used a critical social science perspective

Studies of occupation have increasingly incorporated concepts from a critical social science perspective (Stadnyk, 2011). For example, Laliberte Rudman and Molke (2008) examined how productive aging (i.e., encouraging older inactive adults to move back into the workforce) is presented in the media and how these presentations influence the activities that older adults see as possible and ideal. Beagan and D’Sylva (2011) investigated the occupational meaning of food preparation and the power women attain by preparing a highly significant symbol of their culture. Townsend and Wilcock’s (2004) work on occupational justice (a field of study that considers diverse occupational needs, strengths, and potentials of individuals and groups, while taking into account occupational enablement, empowerment, rights, and fairness (Stadnyk et al., 2010) used a critical social science perspective to examine the socio-cultural processes that inhibit people from participating in activities. Park Lala and Kinsella (2011b) examined the underlying assumptions of phenomenology and found that critical features of the phenomenological tradition could be used to offer a critique of normative perspectives, master narratives, and dominant discourses about human occupation.

In their recent book, Whiteford and Hocking (2012) promote the idea of using critical social science perspectives in occupational research. Although the book is in part focused on conducting critical research, no description is provided of an approach to research that could be used to understand how knowledge is re/produced through engagement in occupations. The text thus leaves readers excited about the possibilities of critical occupational research but unsure about how to proceed.

Although there are some studies that use both occupational and critical social science perspectives, there is little information about how these combined perspectives can ground and guide research or the specific methodologies for conducting research that incorporates both these perspectives. To help address these gaps, we propose a critical occupational approach as a way to proceed with research that seeks to understand the
assumptions and ideologies underlying human activity and how knowledge is re/produced through engagement in occupations. In the following sections we first describe a critical occupational approach and then use a case study of sport-for-development programs in Zambia to illustrate the approach.

6 Introducing a critical occupational approach

A critical occupational approach considers occupation to be a site of knowledge production rather than the object of inquiry. An object of inquiry is typically considered a static phenomenon that is assigned meaning rather than an active political site where meaning is generated and contested. This idea is based on the assumption that knowledge production differs from the meaning making described in traditional phenomenology and other more interpretive qualitative traditions (Crotty, 1998). From a critical occupational perspective, knowledge production involves the social re/production of knowledge in relation to the political and social contexts of an occupation, whereas meaning making involves understanding people’s personal subjective experiences when they engage in an occupation.

Many studies (e.g., Devine & Nolan, 2007; Hon, Sun, Suto, & Forwell, 2011; Njelesani, Sedgwick, Davis, & Polatajko, 2011) have largely considered occupation to be part of a broader research inquiry rather than a site of knowledge production. Understanding knowledge production involves an exploration of what knowledge is produced, how it is produced, the context in which it is produced, the way it is organized, and the systems that control what is produced (Gibbons, 1994). In this context, knowledge generation is neither a simple nor a neutral process; rather, it is complex and contextually bound (Kinsella & Whiteford, 2009). In other words, knowledge generation is politically active.

Recognizing occupation as a site of knowledge production acknowledges that the meanings associated with an occupation are transient and depend on context. These meanings are constantly being re/produced among social actors, and they are also evolving in reaction to changes in social context. In addition, these meanings have co-constituting relationships with context because changes in the meaning of occupation also
affect the socio-political environment. Research that uses a critical occupational approach may seek to understand:

- What knowledge is produced when engaging in an occupation
- How this knowledge is re/produced
- The context in which an occupation is situated and, as a result, where knowledge is produced
- Who controls knowledge production and the mechanisms involved in choosing an occupation
- Who stands to gain or lose by this knowledge production

7 Applying a critical occupational approach to research

7.1 Identifying the research purpose

Once occupation is recognized as a site of knowledge production, researchers are able to problematize occupations which are no longer seen as neutral or natural. As such, research using a critical occupational approach may, for example, focus on uncovering:

- Meanings associated with occupations that are taken for granted by individuals and how these might contribute to marginalization or oppression
- How prevailing socio-cultural norms and values may shape occupational choices and preferences
- How gender, ethnicity, and other social categories intersect to mediate social roles and their associated occupations
7.2 Considerations for data generation

Choosing methods for a critical occupational approach is not substantially different from the process used for any other study. Whether to use quantitative or qualitative research methods is based on the nature, aims, and goals of the research. We anticipate, however, that many of the research questions developed using a critical occupational approach may lend themselves to qualitative methods. The form and format of the methods, including interviews, focus groups, observations, document review, and/or memo writing will vary according to the goals of the study. For example, interviews might be used as a way of examining participants’ assumptions, beliefs, and values in relation to the occupation being studied. As interviews are also considered collaborative dialogues between the researcher and the participant that have inherent power relations, they might be considered as sites of knowledge production in and of themselves. While interviews can provide a rich understanding of how participants re-produce or contest knowledge, participant observation might be used to provide critical information regarding participants’ interactions in the context of the occupation. Participant observation can produce important different information than an interview because participants are not explaining their practices in relation to context as they do during an interview.

7.3 Considerations for data analysis

A critical occupational approach aims at results that are deeper than the level of description. A critical occupational approach serves to identify dominant ideologies surrounding an occupation and reveal the social structures and assumptions that may not be recognized by participants. A critical occupational approach acknowledges that participants may be largely unreflective of the social structures and assumptions that affect their beliefs and engagement in occupations. The unpacking of these social structures and assumptions distinguishes this analysis from the aims of other qualitative research methods.

In order to identify the dominant ideologies surrounding an occupation and illuminate the assumptions and social structures that may not be recognized by participants or
researchers, in a critical occupational approach, researchers must attempt to make taken-for-granted assumptions explicit. When critical occupational researchers make assumptions explicit, contradictions among assumptions can be identified (e.g., participants say one thing and do another or use ‘double standards’). Once implicit assumptions are made explicit, analysis can work to identify the overarching dominant ideologies and social structures that underpin these assumptions. Then, an examination can be made of how various ideologies and structures may influence knowledge production/reproduction in relation to the political and social context of an occupation.

Furthermore, theorizing in a critical occupational approach requires shedding light on macro-sociological concerns about power, social position (in relation to gender, class, ethnicity etc.), and social structure as they relate to occupation.

Asking critical occupational questions of the data (as opposed to the participants) is one technique that can be used to analyze data generated in studies that use a critical occupational approach. This technique includes asking questions about how knowledge might be re/produced when engaging in occupations and how dominant ideologies, hegemonic practices, and power relations influence occupations. Critical occupational questions that a researcher might ask of her/his data could include:

- What are the relevant socio-cultural structures and processes that may mediate and constrain participants’ perspectives?
- Which occupations are seen as being preferable? How are these represented?
- What appears to be understood as the preferred way to engage in occupations?
- What assumptions underpin the ongoing valorization of some occupations and the rejection of others?
- What power relations are at play?
- Whose interests do the occupations serve?
- Who should and should not be participating in the occupations?
Memo writing (Birks, Chapman, & Francis 2008) is also recommended when analyzing data generated in critical occupational studies. Writing reflexive memos involves thinking critically about what you have done and why, challenging your own assumptions and recognizing the extent to which your thoughts shape what you see. Analytical memos serve to assist the researcher in making conceptual leaps from raw data to those abstractions that explain research phenomena in the context in which they are examined. Thus, memo writing is a question raising, puzzle-piecing, connection-making, problem-solving, answer-generating tool. Similar to the technique’s benefits in other qualitative methods, memo writing enables researchers to write and think about how the emerging results shed light on the influence of power, social class, and social structure on an occupation.

7.4 Considerations for presenting results

When using a critical occupational approach, the results must be congruent with an occupational perspective and be critical in nature. The results should illuminate how occupations are understood in a social context. It is this richer understanding of the assumptions and ideologies that underlie human activity in a social context that makes the results of a critical occupational approach unique from results generated by other approaches.

7.5 Applying a critical occupational approach to a sport-for-development case study

Having described the conceptual basis for a critical occupational approach, and considerations for its application in research, we now use a case study to demonstrate how these concepts were operationalized in our own research. For further details of the study see Njelesani, Gibson, Cameron, Nixon, & Polatajko, (submitted).
7.6 Research purpose in our case study

The purpose of our case study was to examine how sport-for-development ideologies and practices in Lusaka, Zambia influenced the participation of youth. Given this purpose, participation in sport-for-development activities was viewed as the site of knowledge re/production. A critical occupational approach was appropriate to guide the research because the study was designed to go beyond program evaluation and examine the ongoing acceptance of, or resistance to, activities used in sport-for-development programs. Sport-for-development programs were the focus of this research because over the past 15 years there has been a proliferation of new international development initiatives focused on sport occupations, but to date the research has not included an analysis of sport-for-development from a critical occupational approach. This is a conspicuous shortcoming given that sport-for-development initiatives use sport occupations as their primary method of program delivery. Zambia was chosen as the context for the study because it has been at the forefront of efforts to use sport as a tool for development (Lindsey & Banda, 2011). The study was granted ethical approval by the University of Toronto and the University of Zambia.

7.7 Data generation in our case study

To generate data in our study, we conducted key informant interviews with 27 staff and youth participants in sport-for-development organizations. The interview questions helped guide an in-depth exploration of participants’ participation in sport occupations in relation to context, the knowledge produced through this participation, and how this knowledge might affect participants’ opportunities to engage in occupations (see Table 4.1).

In addition to interviews, we conducted observations of people’s interactions with their environments. From a critical occupational approach, participant observation enabled us to gain a better understanding of how the occupations were used in the setting (e.g., how religiously significant activities started the day’s programming), who was participating and not participating in the occupations (e.g., who was invited but unable to participate
because they lacked sporting attire), the social behavior among staff and youth (e.g., who was selected to play on the teams during competitive games), and who held authority, initiated and lead activities, enforced discipline, and made final decisions (e.g., who determined which age/level of boys teams played against older girls teams). Data consisted of observational field notes and the interview transcripts.

Table 4.1  Excerpts from interview guide

| · Are there guiding principles that influence your choice of activities to be used? |
| · What are the local customs and traditions that influence your choice of program activities? |
| · Have program youth voiced any requests to you for changes in your program activities? |
| · To what extent does the age, race, class, gender, sexuality, or ability (social categories) of program youth enable or prevent you from carrying out program activities? |

7.8  Data analysis in our case study

As described in (Njelesani et al, 2012), in this study we used multiple analytical techniques drawn from the qualitative data analysis approach described by Miles and Huberman (1994), the multiple case study analysis approach described by Stake (2006), and the coding methods described by Saldana (2009). The techniques used to analyze the data collected in our study included: (a) a priori and inductive coding; (b) pattern coding, which involved grouping similar codes together based on their commonalities and identifying emerging themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994); (c) constructing diagrams (Clarke, 2005) and tables; and (d) memo writing (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008).

The coding approach involved generating and assigning a priori and inductive codes. We created a priori codes based on our research objectives, occupational and critical perspectives, and the reviewed literature. One of our initial apriori codes involved taking the dominant and largely unchallenged idea from the literature that sport can be a moral compass for children (Delaney & Madigan, 2009). This idea is based on the assumption that when children participate in sport they are not engaging in harmful activities. In the
case of Zambia, which is a Christian nation, harmful activities are often linked to being in opposition to Christian values and led us to the development of the apriori code, *save the children*. Instances of participants’ talking about the ability of sports to correct what was viewed as wrong or not consistent with Christian values included: “The girls were living a reckless life, but after we introduced the program, now they are living a good life” (Paul, staff). The idea of how sport was seen to lead towards engaging in behaviors that are valued in Zambian society was also noted by participants: “I keep myself busy than doing things that are harmful” (Pamela, participant).

We also asked critical occupational questions similar to those listed above in order to narrow our focus during data analysis. This process led to the generation of codes such as *occupations reinforcing stereotypes*, which revealed stereotypes about how girls should behave in society: “But because of our intervention, you can see that those people who wanted to be lesbians they changed to live their normal life” (Paul, staff). Throughout the coding process, we engaged in the process of writing reflexive and analytical memos. Memo writing strengthened our analysis by helping us dive deeper into the data and create stronger ties between the data and our critical occupational approach.

We aimed for results that went beyond description and revealed more than a set of nouns that contain only surface, descriptive patterns, and thus, we used the touch test (Saldana, 2009). This strategy helped us progress from the particular to the general and involved examining the results and asking the following question: “Can I touch what they represent?” If the answer was yes, then more interpretation was required. For example, one preliminarily category that we developed was *male-only sports*, but this theme failed the touch test because it was too concrete and only contained a description of sports. We then engaged in deeper interpretation and used the concept of *social differentiation* to generate the higher-level theme of *all for the boys*. Social differentiation is defined as “the distinction made between social groups and persons on the basis of biological, physiological, and sociocultural factors, as sex, age, race, nationality etc.” (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2012). The theme, *all for the boys*, passed the touch test because it contains abstract concepts that helped us understand the sports occupations. Together, all of the analytical techniques helped us think about the data more theoretically and pushed
us to move from specific codes to themes that are grounded in a critical occupational approach.

7.9 Results of our case study

Having described the techniques used to analyze the data collected in our study, we now present an excerpt of the results from our study to demonstrate how the results are congruent with an occupational perspective and are critical in nature. The results of our analysis revealed that participants re/produced dominant ideologies and beliefs about the interaction among physical (e.g., space is allocated by the government for youth to play sports), social (e.g., ideas about appropriate sports to be played in a Christian nation), cultural (e.g., appropriate sports for girls), historical (e.g., how sport occupations were introduced into Zambian society), and political (e.g., priority of funding for sport occupations) contexts. When examining the ideologies, our data suggested that many participants took for granted that sports are appropriate activities to use in youth programs: “Because youths love sport on any given day, a weekend or a working day, youths love sport [football]” (David, staff). “Even if a Zambian is playing football at the international level, everyone believes that they should have the experience of playing football as a child” (Paul, staff). In these examples, staff participants reproduced dominant beliefs and assumptions about sports and the benefits of sport activities: (a) every youth should be participating in sports, (b) sport has benefits for all groups of youth, and (c) sports do not have negative consequences.

A key theme we identified was titled, escape to the big leagues. In this theme we illuminate how programs were seen as a success when boys reached the goal of playing football (known as soccer in North America) as paid professional athletes. For example, a staff member stated, “If these boys work hard using sports they are able to feed their families because they create a career as a result of that” (Mwamba, female, staff). This understanding of becoming a professional footballer as a central goal of the activity was pervasive in the interviews and took precedence over other program aims, such as increased HIV awareness or girl youth empowerment. Therefore, the theme, escape to the big leagues, captured the value assigned to becoming a professional player in the context
of the program and reflects ideologies that valorize and privilege male roles as breadwinner that contrast with the formal official goals of the program.

Our results illuminate how dominant ideologies within the sport-for-development movement in Lusaka, Zambia may create inequalities and limit the opportunities of some youth to participate in the organizations’ activities. It is this richer understanding of the assumptions (i.e., sports do not have negative consequences) and ideologies (i.e., sport is a masculine and non-disabled domain) that underlie human activity (i.e., participation in sport occupations) in a social context (i.e., sport-for-development programs in Lusaka, Zambia) that makes the results of our study using a critical occupational approach to research unique from results generated by other approaches.

8 Discussion

In this article, we have drawn on our experience to provide an illustrative example of conducting research using a critical occupational approach. This paper is not meant to be a standalone guide for using a critical occupational approach to research but to help illuminate and apply literature that discusses occupational and critical social science theories and methods.

The central focus of critical occupation studies has been the meso-societal influences that affect occupations; however, few studies have examined macro-level societal influences, which is useful for a critical occupational approach (Laliberte-Rudman, 2012). According to Dickie, Cutchin, and Humphry (2006), an individualistic perspective has been over-emphasized in occupational science and other health and social disciplines. They suggest that an increased focus on the transactional relationship between the individual, the environment, and the occupation is needed. Wilcock and Hocking (2004) also identify the need for more population-level studies that examine occupations because these types of studies would produce results that cannot be achieved using a more individual and reductionist approach to the study of occupation. A critical occupational approach is one method that could be used for these types of studies because it goes beyond an investigation and interpretation of individual experience.
A critical occupational approach provides occupational science researchers a description of how to proceed with research that seeks to understand the assumptions and ideologies underlying human activity and how knowledge may be re/produced through the organization of engagement in occupations. Beyond the discipline of occupational science, the approach could help researchers in other disciplines critically reflect and expand their ways of thinking about an occupational phenomenon. For use in other disciplines the critical occupational approach can be modified to suit the construct in question and the researcher’s discipline. One challenge of the approach for researchers from outside the occupational therapy or occupational science disciplines is that the concept of occupation may not be familiar to them, thus they may choose to use concepts that are more familiar in their own disciplines. There is, however, a benefit to using a definition of occupation that has been debated and established in the occupational science literature, and researchers from other disciplines should ensure that their concept of occupation is related to human doings in order for their study to be congruent with a critical occupational approach. Finally, a critical occupational approach is valuable generally because it enables researchers to weave critical social theory into empirical research. In order to enable researchers from occupational science and other disciplines to make a judgment about the quality and transferability of the approach to their own research, future research that uses this approach is needed to provide researchers with greater practical examples of this approach.

9 Conclusion

A critical occupational approach has the potential to provide important insight into the assumptions and ideologies underlying human activity, how knowledge is re/produced when engaging in occupations, who controls knowledge production, the social dimensions of engaging in occupations, how an occupation is chosen, and the social, cultural, and political contexts of occupations. Although this approach is suited to research in occupational therapy or occupational science, a critical occupational approach could be used to obtain macro-level information about occupations in other areas of health and social research.
10 Acknowledgments

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Chapter 5
A Critical Occupational Approach: Offering Insights on the
Sport-for-Development Playing Field

A version of this chapter has been submitted as a manuscript to the journal *Sport in Society*.

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1 Abstract

Operating under the rubric *sport-for-development*, the past 15 years has witnessed a proliferation of nongovernmental organizations mobilizing sport activities as a tool for international development. Along with the growth in sport-for-development programs, an academic analysis of this phenomenon has emerged. However, this body of research has not included an analysis from a critical occupational perspective. This is a conspicuous shortcoming since, in the language of occupational science, sport-for-development initiatives are occupation-based programs. In this chapter, we used a critical occupational approach to explore how program staff and youth participants speak about and understand the use of sport activities in sport-for-development programs in Zambia. Five case studies were conducted with sport-for-development organizations in Lusaka. A critical occupational approach served to illuminate the form, function, and meaning of sports in these programs: (1) Form: Football predominated. It was chosen based on the premise that communities valued it and that it had many inherent benefits. (2) Function: Among other functions, football was thought to be a good alternative to engaging in negatively valued activities. It was also seen as a path that could lead boys to a career in playing professional sports and thus programs focused on sport development. (3) Meaning: Football held significance within the youths’ lives, although this was more so the case for boys than girls. Our findings further served to illuminate the contributions that a critical occupational approach can bring to the study of sport-for-development.
2 Introduction

Sport-for-development is a rapidly emerging phenomenon among nongovernmental organizations (NGO) focused on international development. The past 15 years has seen a proliferation of new international development initiatives focused on sports. This rapid growth in sport-for-development programs has occurred, in part, because sports are considered a simple, low-cost, effective way to contribute to international development (Van Eekeren, 2006). Alongside this development, scholarly research of sport-for-development programs has also emerged. While this has covered diverse areas (e.g., health, education, child and youth development, peace building, and economic development) with a wide range of stakeholders (e.g., volunteers, donors, staff, and youth) in many regions worldwide (e.g., Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, India, and the Middle East), a need has been identified for alternative research methods and the engagement of other disciplines in sport-for-development research (Donnelly et al., 2011). From an occupational perspective, this research is lacking in analyses of the role the sports themselves play; in other words, it has not included a critical occupational analysis. This is a conspicuous shortcoming since sport-for-development initiatives are based on activities (e.g., football, basketball, netball, etc.), which, in the language of occupational science, are occupations. It is postulated that bringing a critical occupational approach to sport-for-development research will add to the scholarly understanding of the phenomenon. Accordingly, a study was undertaken to examine sport-for-development programs using a critical occupational approach. In this chapter, we present part of our findings. Specifically, we present a description of how program staff and youth in Lusaka, Zambia, speak about and understand the use of sport activities in sport-for-development programs. Elsewhere, we explore how sport-for-development ideologies and practices in Zambia influence the participation of youth (Njelesani et al., submitted).
3 Background

3.1 Sport-for-development

Sport-for-development is conceived, explained, understood, and practised in a number of different ways. There are a wide variety of frequently vague definitions of the term, which is a conceptual weakness acknowledged by Coalter (2007) and the Sport-for-Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG, 2007). For brevity and clarity, in this paper we adopt the definition proposed by Levermore and Beacom (2009), “all types of organized physical activity that may serve as a tool for development and peace” (p. 33). Sport-for-development is to be distinguished from sport development because it is not concerned with whether participants ever become involved in organized sport training and competition (Kidd, 2008).

The targets of sport-for-development programs generally fall into three categories: (1) social change, (2) health promotion, and (3) economic development (United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force, 2003). SDP IWG (2007) suggested that sport-for-development improves physical fitness, health, mental health, and psychological well-being; has socio-psychological benefits; and has a broad sociological impact, including increased community identity, social coherence, and integration. Although there are demonstrated benefits to sport-for-development programs, it has been noted that some programs are exclusionary to particular groups based on their age, gender, and ability (Giulianotti, 2004) and do not take into account the socio-political environment in which they operate (Coalter, 2010).

There is widespread recognition that more rigorous research needs to be conducted in order to create a robust evidence base and optimize program benefits (Hayhurst, 2009; Kay, 2009; Levermore, 2008; Nicholls et al., 2011). Sport sociologists have responded to this call for research. However, much of the discussion about sport-for-development remains at the theoretical level (Beacom, 2007; Coalter, 2010; Donnelly, 2008; Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2011) and few studies have examined the actual practices of the programs (Guest, 2009). Further, the majority of empirical studies that have been
conducted have failed to include the perspectives of the youth engaged in the programs (e.g., Darnell, 2007; Giulianotti, 2011; Guest, 2009; Nicholls et al., 2011; Sugden, 2006). According to Jeanes (2011), “despite the increasing breadth of study within this area to date, academic analysis has rarely considered the views and perceptions of young people involved, although they are a key target group of many Global South interventions” (p. 2).

3.2 Zambian sport-for-development context

A significant proportion of the sport-for-development research has occurred in Zambia over the past several years. Zambia is a country in Southern Africa with a population of 13.3 million people (SNDP, 2011), with 46% of the population under the age of 15 (WHO, 2012), making for a very young society. Approximately 35% of Zambian adolescents attend school (UNICEF, 2012), but only 10% complete secondary education and pursue higher education (CSO, 2002). Previously known as Northern Rhodesia, Zambia was a British colony until 1964 when the country gained its independence. Zambia’s official national language is English, but a large number of languages and dialects exist, derived from 73 ethnic groups. Christianity is central to Zambia. Introduced in the mid-nineteenth century by European colonial explorers, Zambia was designated a Christian nation in 1991. The majority of Zambians identify themselves as Christian and are typically very active in church (Arnett, 2007).

Zambia faces numerous challenges, including poverty, hunger, low levels of literacy, lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, lack of shelter, and exposure to numerous epidemics (Charlton, Kawana, & Hendricks, 2009). To address these challenges, service provision and policy is both heavily influenced and developed by nongovernmental organizations operating under the banner of international development. It is estimated that about 600 development organizations operate in Zambia, with a significant number of these identifying the use of sports in their programming (Sport and Development, 2012). Given that there are currently more than 20 local and international sport-for-development organizations operating in Zambia, it is considered to be at the forefront of
efforts to use sport as a tool for development (Lindsey & Banda, 2011), and a frequent choice for the study of the phenomenon.

Research in Zambia has explored sport-for-development in relation to female role models (Meier & Saavedra, 2009), partnerships (Lindsey & Banda, 2010), the education sector (Njelesani, 2011), families (Kay & Spaaij, 2011), peer-led education (Jeanes, 2011), and issues of agency, locality, diversity, and culture (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). While the sport-for-development research conducted in Zambia has explored a breadth of concepts integral to the field from a range of theoretical perspectives, it has not included an exploration of the sport activities themselves using a critical occupational approach to research.

3.3 Critical occupational approach

A critical occupational approach can be used to examine the assumptions and ideologies underlying human activity, how knowledge is re/produced through engagement in occupation, who controls the knowledge re/production, the mechanisms of how occupations are taken up, and who stands to gain or lose from them (Njelesani, Gibson, Nixon, Cameron, & Polatajko, under review). The term occupation refers to groups of activities, which are named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture (CAOT, 1997, p. 34). Occupations refer to all manner of activity in which a person participates over the course of a day, week, month, year, or life. In addition to one’s paid work, occupations include such things as caring for oneself or one’s children, attending school, cleaning the house, or playing sports.

A critical occupational approach to research is mutually informed by occupational and critical social science perspectives, serving to locate occupation as a site of knowledge production, that is an active political site where meanings are generated and contested. An occupational perspective is defined as “a way of looking at or thinking about patterns of doing” (Njelesani, Tang, Jonsson, & Polatajko, 2012, p. 8). Patterns of doing reflect the idea of engaging in an occupation. A critical social science perspective applies to a
vast field of theory and research that deals with social transformation, equity, and social justice (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Using constructs from an occupational perspective, a critical occupational approach may examine the form, function, and/or meaning of occupations (Njelesani et al., 2012). Where:

*Occupational form* refers to the what, how, where, and who of a given occupation, that is, its observable aspects (Larson & Zemke, 2003), and the dimensions of activities that give them structure and guide the performance of activities;

*Occupational function* is the purpose or intended outcome of participating in an occupation (Larson & Zemke, 2003);

*Occupational meaning* is the significance of the occupation within the context of a person’s life and culture (Larson & Zemke, 2003).

A critical occupational approach assumes occupations can have many forms, functions, and meanings, and occupations can be seen as both promoting health and wellness and/or being harmful to them.

A critical occupational approach is appropriate to guide sport-for-development research because these programs use sport as a primary means of achieving their goals, and sports are occupations. Through bringing in constructs from occupational science and critical social science, a critical occupational approach can serve to uncover a number of aspects of the role of sport within sport-for-development, for example:

- The meanings associated with sport activities that are taken for granted by program planners and how these might contribute to youths’ lack of participation;

- How prevailing socio-cultural norms and values may be seen to shape the sport activities seen as preferential and thereby implemented in programs.
4 Methodology

This study used a critical occupational approach and qualitative case study design, as described by Stake (2006), to describe how staff and youth speak about and understand the use of sports in sport-for-development programs. Case studies were chosen as the preferred strategy because they delineate the nature of phenomena using a detailed investigation of individual cases and their contexts (Stake, 2006).

Following approval from the Research Ethics Boards at the University of Toronto and the University of Zambia, the recruitment of organizations began. Organizations were approached for inclusion in the study by the first author if they: (1) used sports as a tool for development; (2) operated out of Lusaka, Zambia; (3) were currently offering program services; and (4) had received funding for a period of at least five consecutive years. The last criterion enabled an exploration of organizations considered sustainable.

Maximum variation sampling (Sandelowski, 1995) was used to ensure that a variety of approaches used in sport-for-development programs were examined. In all, seven organizations met these criteria and were approached; five agreed to participate: (1) two organizations that explicitly used modern sports (e.g., football, basketball, and volleyball) in their programs; (2) one organization that explicitly used traditional Zambian sports (e.g., game agode [stone game]); and (3) two organizations that explicitly used a variety of physical activities in their programs (see Table 5.1 for the organizations’ details). In addition to selecting sport-for-development programs that used different approaches to achieve their aims, the organizations were purposively selected to ensure equitable gender and ability representation, thereby two of the organizations specifically focused on working with girls and women and two organizations included boys and girls with disabilities. The organizations had varying missions, as seen in Table 5.1; however, all organizations had the increased participation of girls in sport-for-development programs as a program aim. As agreed to in the consent process, minimal information is presented about each specific case.
Table 5.1  Case study demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
<th>Mission of Organization &amp; Youth Served</th>
<th>Participants in Total</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Local, community based, established in Zambia</td>
<td>HIV prevention awareness, modern sports, traditional games, serving girls and boys</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 European woman, 2 Zambian men</td>
<td>3 Zambian men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Local, community based, established in Zambia</td>
<td>Girl empowerment, modern sports, traditional games, serving girls and boys</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Zambian woman</td>
<td>5 Zambian women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Local, community based, established in Zambia</td>
<td>HIV prevention, modern sports, traditional games, programming for youth with disabilities, serving girls and boys</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Zambian men, 1 European woman</td>
<td>1 Zambian woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Local, community based, established in Zambia</td>
<td>Girl empowerment, modern sports, traditional games, serving girls</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Zambian men, 1 Zambian woman</td>
<td>None were identified by the program director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>International, community based, established in South Africa – Zambian Branch</td>
<td>HIV prevention, modern sports, traditional games, programming for youth with disabilities, serving girls and boys</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Zambian man, 2 Zambian women</td>
<td>2 Zambian men, 1 Zambian woman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following receipt of permission to conduct research at each site, recruitment of both staff and youth participants began by obtaining a list of names of people that had been identified by the program director. We then used purposeful sampling from the list provided to select and invite participants of varying gender, ages, and roles within the organization to achieve a balance of representation. Participants were recruited who satisfied the following inclusion criteria: (1) currently either a program staff (identified as those designing, directing, or leading programs and paid by the organization) or program youth (local individuals who engaged in the activities offered by the organization, referred to as beneficiaries by program staff); (2) minimum of 18 years of age; and (3) able to speak English. We selected participants over 18 years of age in consideration of the issue of parental consent, which would be required for participants younger than 18. Fluency in English was not a barrier to recruitment as it is the national language of Zambia and is the medium of instruction in schools. Furthermore, a research assistant was available to conduct interviews in local languages as needed and also to translate any transcribed words or phrases the participants expressed in a local language. In all cases, all participants who were invited agreed to participate.
Data were generated using semi-structured interviews, field notes taken during observations of program activities, and document analysis. Combining these varied methods developed converging lines of inquiry, which facilitated thick description and deeper understanding of the data. Interviews followed an interview guide designed to obtain participants’ perceptions about the sport activities occurring in these programs (see Table 5.2 for excerpts from the interview guide). The interview guide was revised following a preliminary analysis to gain a richer understanding of the information that had been discussed in previous interviews. Each participant engaged in one interview in a private location at the program site. The interviews were 45 to 90 minutes in length and were conducted by the first author and a local research assistant. We digitally recorded and transcribed all the interviews verbatim.

Field notes were collected during 20 observation sessions including seven sport-for-development program activities (e.g., football tournaments) and 13 organizational activities (e.g., staff orientation, planning and evaluation meetings, and workshops). Documents provided by the directors of the sport-for-development organizations were also collected for examination. Documents collected included trainer’s resource books from case studies one, two, and three as well as newsletters from case study four. No documents were provided by the director of case study five. Data generation took place between June and September 2011 and was accompanied by ongoing data analysis. Data generation was stopped after 27 participants had been interviewed as at that time we had a rich and full analysis that was sufficiently grounded and conceptualized.

Table 5.2  Excerpts from interview guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions for Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How did you become involved in the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you tell me about a typical day for you in the program (i.e., what do you do here when you come)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about the activities you enjoy doing most. How do you feel when you are doing those?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any activities you avoid doing? Tell me about those.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What activities would you like to see used more or instead? Have you had a chance to inform the staff of these ideas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who does not participate in this program (i.e., which youth do you not see here)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do your parents say about you coming here?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions for Staff

- How do you choose/decide which activities to use in programming?
- How do local customs and traditions influence program activities?
- Are there particular activities that you favour/prefer to use in programming?
- What other activities do you think could be used to achieve your program aims?
- Tell me about the knowledge and skills you have that are related to the program activities.
- Have program youth suggested changes to you regarding the program activities?
- Have you experienced any resistance from program youth or community members to any of the program activities?

Data analysis consisted of multiple analytical techniques drawn from the approach described by Miles and Huberman (1994), the multiple case study analysis approach described by Stake (2006), and coding methods described by Saldana (2009). Specifically, our analysis consisted of first generating apriori codes consistent with the study aims and a critical occupational approach. After reading the interview transcripts several times and reflecting on the field notes and written memos, provisional inductive codes were generated by the first author. Both the apriori and inductive sets of codes included codes generated with respect to the constructs of occupational form, function, and meaning (as defined above), because these constructs are integral to an occupational perspective and our research purpose, included examining the use (and thereby the form, function, and meaning) of sport activities in programming. The provisional inductive codes and raw data from the first case were then sent to two members of the team (third and last author) who were not in the field. These team members reviewed these codes and data and made suggestions about modifying both the interview guide and codes.

Following the generation of codes, pattern coding was used to group similar codes into emerging themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To enhance our understanding of these emerging themes, we constructed diagrams and tables (Clarke, 2005) and continued analytic memo writing (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008). Rigour was achieved at this stage using analysis meetings with the entire team and reviewing the emerging themes. With these techniques, we generated themes for each individual case.

Following the generation of themes for all of the cases, the entire team discussed the organization of themes to ensure the themes were internally coherent, consistent, and distinct. Next, given that each case had the same research objective yet occurred in its
own particular context, Stake’s (2006) approach was modified to enable us to examine the relationships that linked the cases. This cross-case analysis was achieved by reviewing each case’s findings and writing analytic memos. Then the memos from each case were reviewed and, in conjunction with the construction of diagrams, were used as a tool to generate cross-case themes.

5 Results

Interviews were conducted with 27 participants (three to six from each organization) from the five organizations as part of the case studies (see Table 5.1). No youth were recruited from case study four because the program director did not identify any youth for us to recruit. The 15 staff participants (nine males and six females) were between 19 and 54 years of age, and the majority had a strong background in playing or coaching competitive sports and a lesser background in international development. The majority of program staff had previously been program youth and had received advanced education (i.e., university and postgraduate studies) and training in sport management and coaching. The 12 youth participants (five males and six females) were between 18 and 27 years of age (participants had to be at least 18 years of age to be included in the study). All the participants were Zambian nationals, except for two international staff from Europe. Pseudonyms are used in this chapter to maintain participant anonymity.

Three major themes were generated from these data. The first, football as our tool, describes the participants’ descriptions of the forms of sport activities that they value for use in programming. The sub-theme within this theme, staff choice, describes who held the power to choose these activities. The second theme, another path, describes the perceived function of participating in sport activities and contains the sub-themes deliver from evil and escape to the big leagues. Finally, the theme a piece of us and its sub-theme, part of being a Zambian boy, describe the meanings ascribed to the sport activities by the participants. Together these themes describe how staff and youth spoke about and understood the use of sport activities in sport-for-development programs.
5.1 Football as our tool

All the participants in the study described the activities that took place in the sport-for-development programs in which they participated. These activities included football (commonly known as soccer in North America, but referred to as football by the participants and in this study), netball, basketball, volleyball, dance, and traditional games. According to the participants, football was by far the most prominent sport among the activities used in the sport-for-development programs. This idea was expressed by youth and staff alike: “In Zambia, they do not look on other sports; they concentrate more especially on football” (George, youth participant).

The participants provided many reasons to explain why football was so prominent. Evans, a staff member, said football was the most popular activity in his program because it is the most popular sport in Zambia: “Football is the most popular sport, and we did not want to change anything, so football becomes top of the agenda.” Similarly, Aaron, a youth participant, noted that football was the most popular activity because all Zambians love the game: “Like football is what they focus on. Everyone loves football. That is how they balance it.” Football was also described as an occupation that brings people together:

When you look at sports, football brings people together and a lot of people get attracted, and for instance, if you have a match, people will just get attracted and come closer and start watching. So it will be like a magnet. Sport will attract them to come together. (Noah, staff)

Mary, a staff member, said football was used in her program because it could easily be adapted to suit individual characteristics: “So, for example, there is a football tournament coming up this weekend, we make that decision [the decision to play football] based on people, the children’s ages and also their skill level.”

Football was also described as being the preferred activity because the game requires few physical resources:

So the easiest facility that they can access in their communities is for football only. They just make a small football pitch, and they make the goal posts out of trees so it will be easier for them to set up. (Anne, staff member)
In addition to not requiring many physical resources, football was lauded as not requiring significant human resources. Musonda, a male staff member, explained that football is a sport that is not technical: “Football is just kicking of the legs and passing the ball” and requires little instruction from staff. Francis, another staff member, said youth easily learn to play football without support from coaches:

Kids are generally six, seven, playing football in the streets because they just pick up papers and plastics and make a ball and start playing. Kids play without supervision. They develop their own skills, and they don’t need coaches to tell them how to pick up a ball. They just learn from other kids playing.

5.1.1 Staff choice

The accounts suggested that activity choices were guided primarily by staff preferences and that program youth had little choice or input. Staff participants indicated that they chose particular sports for their program based on their personal preferences and familiarity with the particular sports. Mary, a staff member, explained, “The ones I enjoy the most are mainly the ones that are taught during our training. And I guess the ones that I’m also good at, that I’ve played before and coached. The ones that I’m familiar with.” Ethel, an older staff member, said, “Well, with my age, yes, there would be some activities that would not suit me, but would suit the children, so I might avoid those that are really hectic for me.”

Staff participants pointed out that there was little discussion with youth participants about the sport-for-development programs, and they thought the lack of feedback indicated that the youth participants were happy with these programs: “They [youths] have not voiced out, they are happy the way things are running currently” (Percy, staff member). “I think people are enthusiastic about wanting to learn new sports but because they doubt if they’ll ever get those equipment or resources, they would never ask” (Mary, staff member).

Youth participants, however, stated that they did not have much choice about their activities in sport-for-development programs. George, a youth participant, said, “There is no choosing. There is one leader on top who gives you what to do.” Female youth also said they were not asked for input into the activities, but attributed that to not being men:
“We would like to have an equal share of everything because mostly men are appreciated more, so we would like to have input” (Trina, youth participant).

5.2 Another path

When talking about the function of the selected activities used, participants described football as an activity that created another path; one that delivered youth from evil by keeping them from engaging in activities that are less valued or seen as harmful in Zambian culture, and one that could help youth reach the goal of playing professional sports.

5.2.1 Deliver from evil

Participants considered sports a way to solve multiple social problems. They talked about sports as a moral compass that kept youths from engaging in behaviours considered undesirable in Zambian society. As Chabala, a male staff member, put it: “They are kept busy and have no time to do bad things such as drugs and alcohol.” Similarly, Noah, also a staff member, emphasized how sports were not only a deterrent but also a healthy activity: “It is a good way of contributing to their health, a good way for recreation, instead of involving themselves in alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and actually makes them stronger.” Youth participants also thought sports kept them from engaging in harmful activities:

The organization empowers girls in sports to avoid bad activities: sexual immoralities, beer drinking, prostitution, early marriages. So avoiding girls from engaging themselves in activities which are not fit for their bodies. By not staying at home we avoid those things. It is better we spend our time at the ground. (Trina, youth participant)

In addition to functioning as a diversion from negative behaviours, sports were also considered to have the ability to transform youths into better citizens. Jonathan, a youth participant, described how sports could change a person’s behaviours:

Most of the kids go to school in the morning, then they knock off in the afternoon. That is when a lot of things seem to happen. When you go out there in places where they take beer, you find that a number of people in such places are youths. For us to end such habits, immediately we knock off from school we do have trainings.
In particular, male staff participants indicated more frequently that sports had the power to change young girls in ways the staff constructed as morally good and in line with dominant Christian views in Zambia:

But because of our intervention, you can see that those people who wanted to be lesbians, they changed to live their normal life. This is change. One of the girls who wanted to become a lesbian, she changed, she became a well-behaved girl. (Alen, staff member)

Male youth participants had ideas that were similar to male staff participants: “The girls were living a reckless life, but after the program now they are living a good life, and they got interested and they are trying to change their friends” (Issac, youth participant). George, a youth participant, agreed that sports could change the behaviour of young girls:

This is more especially in the netball girls. You find that she was once a prostitute. You pull her she became a netball player because she had that interest in playing netball, but her sisters are still prostitutes.

5.2.2 Escape to the big leagues

Participants linked program success with playing football at the professional level. This goal of playing professional football appeared to be the most important goal of these programs. However, this goal was implicit; it was not described in program documents, within which the goals of health promotion, education, and youth development pervaded. For example, one of case study four’s documents described their program as:

a girl’s empowerment through sport program that aims at empowering girls by training and equipping them with skills and knowledge to pursue equality. It strives to empower girls by building physical resources, giving social recognition and challenging some traditional gender myths.

Aaron, a youth participant, recognized the implicit goal: “They are trying to create a future for us.” Jonathan, a youth participant, agreed that this was an important goal of the program:

I really want to have a chance of becoming somebody in life, doing something, to be specific, being a football player, doing something that can keep me busy in my life. Because when I am doing these activities, I do them with all my heart, and I think that this is the kind of thing that I have been wanting to do in my life, and I look forward to doing them even on a higher level, even national level.
Evans, a staff member, said playing professional football was a viable career option for youth participants: “If these young people work hard using sports, they are able to feed their families because they create a career as a result of that.” The implicit aim of playing professional football was also reflected in the priority given to football skills training. Mary, a staff member, said skill development was the focus of her role: “For the older children, it’s more of coaching them the sports. So like teaching them to be better footballers, more on their skill development.”

Participants said playing professional football is valuable because it brings fame and money not only to a young man, but also to his family and community. Francis, a staff member, spoke about the fame of professional footballers: “I was looking at a few boys I was working with, and some of the boys are now playing sports at a highest level, playing professional football in Sweden, Israel, and it is more high life because everyone is talking about them being superstars.”

5.3 A piece of us

The meaning of football within the context of the participants’ lives was described from both the staff and youths’ points of view. Participants talked about having an almost religious view of football: “Football has some kind of a religion. It has a big following, and if you go to a community, you will find a community at a standstill” (Francis, staff member). Not only was football seen as significant in the lives of participants and their communities, football was seen to generate a sense of belonging, collectivity, and identity in Zambian culture: “Football is a Zambian sport despite it coming from somewhere, and this sport has been in Zambia for so long. It is a Zambian sport because when we were born we found it” (Bryan, staff member). Mary, a staff member, also emphasized the idea of football being a part of Zambia’s heritage:¹

Football was played at the tournament, and it was good because the experience of playing football is something here in Zambia people value, this is part of African heritage. Even if a Zambian is playing football at the international level, everyone believes that they should have the experience of playing football as a child.

¹ Football was introduced to Zambia in the beginning of the 1900s by missionaries, British colonial administrators, and investors (Chipande, 2010).
5.3.1 Part of being a Zambian boy

Despite the significance of football within the context of all of the participants’ lives, participants identified playing football as an activity that has different meanings for boys and girls. Mary, a staff member, said football is an activity favoured by boys: “The boys definitely prefer football. And the girls, well, it’s mixed.” Similarly, Alen, a staff member, talked about boys’ preference for football: “If you are targeting the boys, of course boys love to play football, you can’t bring netball. If you choose netball for the boys, then you won’t be able to achieve your objectives.” George, a youth participant, said he considered football a real sport: “I want to go into physical, real sport, not singing.”

In contrast to football being seen as well suited for boys, the same was not said about girls. Chabala, a male staff member, explained why football was not an appropriate activity for girls: “If the girls wear football attire, sometimes they are mistaken to be prostitutes.” Trina, a youth participant, said her family did not support her participation in football:

Our parents say that you, you are girl, you should always be in a chitenge [traditional long wrap worn by Zambian women]. You are ladies. You are supposed to stay at home, cleaning plates, going to the market, cooking, doing all sorts of things, not found on the ground doing things which guys are supposed to do.

6 Discussion

Taking a critical occupational approach, we examined how participants spoke about the sport activities used in sport-for-development programs with respect to their form, function, and meaning.

6.1 Occupational form

While there were a number of different activities mentioned, including basketball, volleyball, and netball, and program initiatives such as school sponsorship, the theme football as our tool identified football as the predominant activity and prioritized
initiative in sport-for-development programs among the cases studied. The sports of netball, basketball, and volleyball were seen to be played during the observation sessions, but much less commonly than football. Traditional games, despite being included as an activity in program documents (e.g., case study one’s resource book states that it is “a high energy approach that integrates sports, physical activity and traditional movement games with HIV and AIDS prevention and education,” while case study three’s manual states that it is “a child empowerment through sport and traditional games integrated with HIV/AIDS, child rights and alcohol/drug abuse life skills concept”), were only seen to be played during the staff training sessions and were not observed during the program activities conducted with youth. The location where traditional games were seen to be played was in the community, outside of program sessions. For example, the first author observed youth playing these traditional games while she was living with her Zambian family, but not when she entered the sport-for-development arena. This observation highlights the contradiction between a seeming interest in Zambian traditional games – given their inclusion in the organization’s program documents and their presence in the streets – and the privileged position of football, which is incorporated more into programming. This privileging of football over traditional games may be rooted in the idea of cultural and economic domination introduced by Whitson (1983) in that traditional games are seen by local people as less attractive than cultural forms originating elsewhere. Similarly, Giulianotti (2004) attributed this phenomenon to the privileging of sports introduced by colonial rulers, resulting in a suppression of traditional games in sport-for-development programs. However, the observed presence of traditional games in the streets may challenge this interpretation.

Football was chosen as the predominant activity as it was seen as the most feasible and sustainable sport to incorporate based on its ability to draw in a large number of youth and its adaptability to the available local resources. These findings support Gasser and Levinsen’s (2004) results, which suggested that program success depends on “maintaining the motivation that springs from the love of football” (p. 466) and a low dependency on resources. Similarly, in another sport-for-development study conducted in Zambia, football was found to be a popular sport and an effective and easy tool that could bring young people together (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). Football being the preferential
form of sport-for-development activity is intrinsically linked to the functions of the activity, which is discussed below.

The idea of incorporating occupations other than football (e.g., dancing, aerobics) and initiatives (e.g., school sponsorship, micro-financing) into sport-for-development programs was mentioned by participants and has been identified in the literature. As Mwaanga (2010) noted, these other activities could make the programs more interesting and attractive. Exploring the notion of incorporating different activities into sport-for-development from a critical occupational approach illuminates the possibility that the activities may have potential benefits (e.g., inclusion of girls and marginalized youth) beyond that of making sport more interesting and attractive, an idea not raised by participants.

Staff member’s interests also mediated the choice of football, as reflected in the sub-theme, staff choice. This is consistent with Lindsey and Grattan’s (2012) point with respect to leaders in sport-for-development in Zambia having a significant role in the determination of programming. However, our findings go beyond that of previous studies to indicate that providing input into the form of activities used stopped at the level of staff, as youth participants were not involved in decision-making at least in the case studies examined. Jeanes (2011), in one of the few contributions in the literature to consider youth’s perspectives, identified that in order to implement interventions that achieve stated objectives, young people’s perspectives must be included. Furthermore, the idea that the choice of occupations used in programming is made solely by staff reinforces the idea that sport-for-development may “serve practitioners as much, if not more, than the people it is intended to serve” (Donnelly et al., 2011, p. 592). This top-down approach to the selection of activities fails to recognize that the decision to engage in occupations is “influenced by such characteristics as personal values, gender, cultural identity and age” (Conner Schisler & Polatajko, 2002, p. 90). As our findings suggested, not directly involving youth in planning leads to some disenchantment and may make some youth less likely to participate as they feel they have no choice or influence.
6.2 Occupational function

The theme another path illuminates the major functions served by sport activities. It became evident through our interviews that sports were considered to provide another path, more specifically a path that would deliver from evil and provide an opportunity for boys to escape to the big leagues. These paths were highly regarded and seen as valuable; however, they were not mentioned in the program documents as an explicit aim of any of the programs.

The sub-theme deliver from evil highlights the function of sport activities as having value in solving social problems and diverting youth from engaging in other activities. Previous sport-for-development literature has described these attributes, and sport has been seen as akin to an “antidote to illnesses of society” (Burnett, 2009, p. 1195) or as a “positive diversion” (Mwaanga, 2010, p. 63).

The idea of sport providing an opportunity for youth to engage in positive activities has strong community backing from schoolteachers, church leaders, and health workers in Zambia who see time spent in sport literally as time spent away from sex, beer drinking, and drug use (Mwaanga, 2010). However, cautions do exist against using sport activities as a diversionary tool, which has also been referred to as sport evangelism. As Giulianotti (2004) pointed out,

> there is little convincing evidence to suggest that such evangelism [to promote organized sporting activities to dissipate ‘dangerous’ energies and divert from ‘licentious’ practices] has proved successful among young people in the West. Based on this evidence it cannot be assumed that youth in other countries are therefore more ready to “receive and internalize the tendentious, self-controlling messages buried within sport”. (p. 357)

Despite the preferred activity being identified as football, a sport considered to be for boys, staff also talked about how it was an activity that reformed girls. This suggests that football has been widely adopted with very little critical attention to its gendered underpinnings. Of the existing literature, no studies were found that identify this contraindication in programming. This sub-theme suggests that in sport-for-development programming the idea that one activity is universal may often be implicitly accepted;
accordingly, there is no need to take into consideration the unique needs and desires of
the various youth participants. This runs contradictory to a major assumption of an
occupational perspective that occupations are idiosyncratic (Polatajko et al., 2007). An
idiosyncratic concept of occupations includes consideration of how specific occupations
that a person engages in are unique to that person, as well as that person’s experiences of
those occupations (p. 208).

The path that underlies the sub-theme escape to the big leagues is that youth will go on to
play football at the professional level. The idea found in these cases of sport as a path to a
future of fame and fortune is similar to how playing professional sports is seen as a path
to upward social mobility in many parts of the world (Spaaji, 2009). Instances of upward
mobility include when poor young males (rarely girls) from rural and urban areas
skyrocket to fame and fortune through success in sports (Eitzen, 2006).

To achieve the aim of playing professional football, a focus on skill development is
required, thus the programs were often concerned with the development of sport skills to
enhance performance in sport as an end itself. This focus on skill development is more
akin to a sport development agenda (Beacom, 2007). The understanding of sport
development leading to playing professionally was pervasive among the interviewees and
took precedence over other program aims, such as increased HIV awareness or girl youth
empowerment; however, the goal of sport development was not identified when staff
talked about the formal aims of their programs. As has been suggested by Burnett (2009),
this focus on sport development leads to event-driven programs and may occur to such an
extent that development is compromised. Giulianotti (2004) further emphasizes how
youths’ development is compromised with a focus on sport development, as
“specialization in sports with a view towards entering elite levels has invariably led to a
serious deficit in other forms of education that would otherwise promote personal and
social development” (p. 361).

Given that the majority of the staff participants have stronger coaching and athletic
backgrounds than international development experience, the focus on sport development
in the cases studied is not surprising. Furthermore, the broader international development
context in which the organizations operate also influences this focus on the development of sport, as identified by Kidd (2008): “most organizations, are rooted in sports, ideologically and structurally preoccupied with high performance, and face expectations from their members and donors to focus on sports development” (p. 373).

This function of football as an *escape to the big leagues* illuminated another possible reason that football emerged as the prioritized sport. Football is one of the highest-paid sports internationally (Sporting Intelligence, 2012); therefore, playing this sport at the highest professional level brings greater prosperity than other sports or traditional games. This may indirectly serve international development goals by bringing increased wealth to at least a segment of the population.

Nonetheless, the findings here revealed that while the sport development aspect of football may work for some groups of people and some purposes (i.e., boys who go on to support their families through salaries earned as a professional football player), it does not necessarily work for others. The girls in our study did not talk about and were not mentioned when it came to achieving a career or economic fortune from playing football. Further, playing competitive football at a level where fame and fortune are garnered automatically excludes girls and requires a high level of athleticism that excludes most boys as well. It most certainly excludes boys and girls with disabilities. In other words, the function of the program as a path to playing professional football does not take into consideration the needs of all program participants. The youth participants expressed a tacit recognition of this implicit function of the program, as the potential for sport careers was not mentioned to be one of their goals by any of the girl youth and was only considered by some of the boys.

In spite of setting out to identify whether participants would consider other forms (i.e., other than football) of activities for achieving the same functions (i.e., diversion from participating in negative activities or achieving a professional sport career) during the interviews, participants did not talk about the use of any activities that were not sports related and deflected the issue when directly asked, “What other types of activities could be used to make that happen?” There are a number of possible reasons for this, including
the positionalities of participants as sport coaches and athletes in a culture of programming that idealizes and prioritizes sport activities and/or the belief that the researchers or results may have an impact on funding or donors from sporting bodies.

6.3 Occupational meaning

The theme *a piece of us* together with its sub-theme *part of being a Zambian boy* speaks to occupational meaning. This is a new addition to the literature as to date the meanings associated with the selected activities have not been a significant feature of sport-for-development research.

The theme *a piece of us* demonstrates the significance of football within the context of the participants’ lives, in that football in Zambia was seen to generate a sense of belonging, collectivity, and identity – in other words, football is part of the Zambian sporting culture. This notion of communities having a sporting culture is discussed widely in the broad sporting literature (Hughson, 2009) and has been discussed specifically in the sport-for-development literature by Burnett (2009). The significance of football to Zambia’s heritage was also illuminated in our results. Participants spoke of how the sport not only connected Zambians to one another but also connected Zambians to their heritage. Despite football being talked about as essential to Zambian heritage, and identified as the national sport (Banda, 2010), it is not recognized as a traditional Zambian game (Kakuwa, 2000) – in other words, it is not a game that has been passed on from generation to generation with reference to a particular society or ethnic group in Zambia.

The sub-theme *part of being a Zambian boy* highlights that football in Zambia is a heavily gendered activity. Gender typing happens to some extent in all sports contexts, but which sports are typed as being appropriate for which gender varies according to culture (Koivula, 2001). In our study, football was talked about as being a more meaningful activity for boys than girls. This finding reveals an ambivalent space between discourse and practice. Football was the most predominantly used activity despite organizations striving to increase girls’ participation. Staff invited girls to play, but they
did not support the participation of girls in sport by specifically considering the forms, functions, and meanings of the occupations that would suit them. No previous research in the sport-for-development literature could be found that identified this discrepancy – that although organizations promote equal opportunities for boys and girls, they do not consider prioritizing activities for which girls express a preference.

6.4 Interrelationship between form, function, and meaning

In this study, through using a critical occupational approach, we identified how the form (football), underlying functions (another path), and meanings (embedded in Zambian culture and for boys) of sport activities were talked about by the participants. In so doing, we were able to highlight an interrelationship among occupational form, function, and meaning.

The results indicate that the provision of programming through sports is no small contribution. The use of sport as the tool was seen to contribute in many ways. Particularly, football was seen to have many inherent benefits including generating a sense of belonging, collectivity, and identity. Football was also seen as a feasible and sustainable sport to incorporate based on being an easy tool that could draw in a large number of youth and its adaptability to the available local resources. Furthermore, football was seen to be a good diversion from negatively valued activities and as a path to a professional sporting career.

In considering the interrelationship between occupational form, function, and meaning, the results also illuminated for whom the occupations were prioritized and thereby who was excluded. By having football as the preferential form of occupation in programming, and along with that the function of skill development to reach the goal of playing professionally, it follows that occupations operationalized in programs were best suited for boy athletes and perhaps not as well suited for girls, for other boys who were not seen to hold the potential of playing professionally, and for both boys and girls with disabilities. Other studies have shown that, over time, delivery of traditionally male
activities contributes to the decline of female participation in sport-for-development programs (Burnett, 2009), a target of all of the cases in our study.

### 6.5 Limitations

The participants interviewed were all identified by program directors. While this recruitment strategy could be considered advantageous, in that the program director identified participants that best fit the inclusion criteria and who would probably be agreeable to participate, it also has potential limitations. This recruitment strategy may have resulted in participants only being interviewed who held a perspective that was seen as valued by the program director. For example, although it was important for us to ensure equitable gender and ability representation, we recruited only one staff member who identified as living with a disability and no youth fitting this criterion. This could reflect the stigma of disability in Zambian society; the directors of the organizations who provided the list of names of participants did not provide any names of boys or girls living with disabilities. They may have plausibly felt that boys and girls with disabilities had no valuable information to offer, or they also could have seen these youth as highly vulnerable and therefore felt the need to protect them from strangers and outsiders.

Second, it was not feasible to interview youths who were not participating in these programs, and as a result it was not possible to discover why many youths do not attend these programs. The inclusion of youths who do not attend these programs could have provided important information about the social and cultural barriers to participating in sport-for-development programs faced by Zambian youths. Furthermore, as the organizations included children and youth ages six to 24 years old, exclusion of program youths under the age of 18 may have limited the perspectives gathered.

Retrospectively, given that families are key stakeholders, parents’ views could have offered further insights and provided a richer understanding of the phenomena. Parents of the youth participants in our study did not attend any of the activities (e.g., football tournament) held during this study; therefore, no data were collected from the parents. This may have limited our findings as well.
6.6 Critical occupational approach to sport-for-development

It is notable that questions of which sport activities are used, who the sports are targeted to benefit, how they are carried out, and what the underlying meanings are have typically not been a significant feature of the sport-for-development literature. To date, that literature (e.g., Peacock-Villada et al., 2007; Maro et al., 2009) has tended to focus on whether sport did actually contribute to development in the ways that were hoped for and envisaged by program planners. The novel findings here can be attributed to the critical occupational approach we adopted to carry out this study. Our findings suggest that a critical occupational approach could be useful to sport sociologists in developing a more profound understanding of the sport activities that are core to their field. For example, one finding identified in our study that emerged from our critical occupational approach is that, while girls were welcome and encouraged to play, the programs not did specifically consider the forms, functions, and meanings of occupations that might suit girls best and thereby support their participation.

Despite the apparent benefits of a critical occupational approach to sport-for-development research, the limitations of the approach should be noted. Most significant among these is the relative scarcity of occupational science literature. As is apparent in this discussion, when comparing and contrasting the findings with existing literature, there was significantly less literature available from the occupational perspectives than from critical perspectives. This may be, in part, due to the relatively recent development of occupational science as a discipline (the last decade of the twentieth century) (Laliberte-Rudman et al., 2008); and, in part, due to the little attention the occupations of persons living outside of a Western context have received in the discipline (Hocking, 2012).

6.7 Future directions

While the findings of this study add to our understanding of participants’ perceptions about the form, function, and meaning of the activities used in sport-for-development programs, it is important to consider the ideologies and beliefs that contribute to the re/production of these understandings, how these ideologies and beliefs influence
programming, and how they are situated within the Zambian cultural and social environment. Therefore, the results could be further explored using a critical occupational approach to determine how sport-for-development ideologies and practices in Zambia influence the participation of youth.

7 Summary

This chapter set out to describe how program staff and youth spoke about and understood the use of sport activities in sport-for-development programs in Lusaka, Zambia. This is the first published study that has examined sport-for-development from a critical occupational perspective. This has led to unique findings, in that we did not focus on the outcomes of programs but sought to understand staff and youths’ perspectives regarding the forms, functions, and meanings of sport activities used in these programs. Furthermore, our study met the identified need for studies on occupation “outside of the context of disability and/or therapy” (Dickie, 2003, p. 121) and that “engage with more diverse populations” (Hocking, 2012, p. 62), as recognized by experts in the field.

Examining sport-for-development using a critical occupational approach provided insights and understanding about the interrelationship between the form, function, and meaning of the occupations used in programming. Our findings illuminated that football was seen to be the primary sport used. This was considered to be a successful choice as communities valued football and saw it as having many inherent benefits; it was seen as affirming of national identity and was thought to be feasible and sustainable. In regards to the function of the preferred activity, football was utilized by the organizations as a pathway for boys to play professional football and as an activity that deterred youth from engaging in less valued activities or those seen as harmful in Zambian culture.

Considering the form, function, and meaning together, given that football – which is heavily gendered and segregated – was constructed as the preferential activity for programs, non-disabled boys were seen as the primary beneficiaries of the programs.
8 Acknowledgments

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Chapter 6
Sport-for-Development: A Level Playing Field?

A version of this chapter has been submitted as a manuscript to the journal *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*.

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1 Abstract

In the burgeoning field of sport-for-development, the benefits of participation for youth have been widely discussed; however, it has also been noted that some youth are excluded based on ability, location, economic means, and gender and are thus not participating. We considered that this might be an issue of ideologies. From a critical occupational approach, sport-for-development programs are seen as sites where ideologies are re/produced. Thus, it was the purpose of this study to use a critical occupational approach to explore how sport-for-development ideologies and practices in Zambia shape the participation of youth. Drawing on empirical data gathered from five case studies of sport-for-development organizations in Lusaka, Zambia, we examined the ideological beliefs in order to gain a better understanding of how the beliefs shape inequalities in participation as a component of occupational injustice. The results illuminate three themes that serve as ideological beliefs within the Zambian sport-for-development context. The first, *sport benefits all*, contributed to the practice of sport being used uncritically as an activity for all youth. The second, *good people do but don’t do*, perpetuated what were considered acceptable activities that boys and girls could do in the local context. Finally, a belief that *sport is the way out* privileged boys who play football as well as athletic non-disabled boys in opposition to girls, poor youth, rural youth, and girls and boys with disabilities. Together these beliefs have contributed to successes (sport careers) and shortcomings (occupational injustices) associated with the sport-for-development phenomenon. It is this richer understanding of the ideologies that underlie participation in sport-for-development programs that makes the results of our study using a critical occupational approach to research unique.
2 Introduction

Recent years have seen a proliferation of international development nongovernmental organizations using sport activities as tools to facilitate social improvement in communities (Kidd, 2008). These organizations operate under the rubric of sport-for-development. Identified benefits of participation in sport-for-development programs have included improved physical fitness, physical health, mental health, psychological well-being, socio-psychological benefits, increased community identity, social coherence, and integration (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group [SDP IWG], 2007).

With the proliferation of sport-for-development organizations using sport activities as tools to facilitate social improvement, it has been noted, that in spite of stated goals, some individuals are excluded based on age, gender, and ability (Giulianotti, 2004). We considered that this might be an issue of ideologies. From a critical occupational approach, sport-for-development programs are seen as sites where ideologies are challenged and re/produced. For the purposes of this study, ideology is defined as a broad system of shared beliefs that serve to justify and support the interests of a particular group or organization (Eagleton, 1991). In turn, dominant ideologies are those that are most prevalent in a particular socio-cultural field and signify dominant forms of thought in a society, not just any set of beliefs (Eagleton, 1991). Ideologies, for the most part, go unrecognized and unquestioned (Lipman, 1997).

A number of ideological beliefs have been articulated in the sport-for-development literature. Prevalent in the sport-for-development movement is the belief that sport will improve the welfare of Others through development (Darnell, 2012). Accordingly, sport-for-development is organized to provide better opportunities for Others, wherein Others are the target beneficiaries who are seen as different (e.g., of a different race, class, culture, etc.) from oneself (e.g., donor).

Another prevailing belief is that sport is a universal language (Donnelly, 2008). This has contributed to the re/production of the idea that sport is an activity that is appropriate to
use in programming for all youth. Nelson Mandela described sport as “being able to speak to people in a language they can understand,” and as cited in Donnelly (2008) former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called sport “a global language capable of bridging social, cultural, and religious divides” (p. 382). In considering these two beliefs together, they suggest an inclusive ideology that is espoused in the sport-for-development literature, that is, an aim to include all youth, regardless of gender, economic means, or ability in sport-for-development programming.

Although there has been a rapid expansion of sport-for-development and a concomitant rise in research, most of the research has tended to be portrayed as functional, unproblematic, and dominated by hard facts (i.e., positivist forms of knowledge) (Kay, 2009, p. 1178). Nonetheless, cautionary tales about privileging positivist forms of knowledge have been brought forward, along with the raising of critical questions about sport-for-development. Donnelly (2008) argued that this representation in purely positive terms of sport serving as a tool for development is problematic. For example, because competitive sport is based on social exclusion it may promote the very injustices (e.g., exclusion of girl youth) it aims to address in the first place. From a critical occupational approach, this exclusion of some youth may be seen as an issue of occupational justice. Occupational justice is “a concept that can be used to guide consideration of diverse occupational needs, strengths, and potential of individuals and groups, while taking into account occupational enablement, empowerment, rights, and fairness” (Stadnyk, 2007, p. 80). These recognitions of the current literature as being dominated by positivist forms of knowledge and the need to ask critical questions supports the need for further critical research. It was therefore the purpose of this study to examine sport-for-development using a critical occupational approach.

This paper is one of two that report on a broad study exploring sport-for-development programs from a critical occupational approach. In the companion paper (Njelesani, Cameron, Gibson, Nixon, & Polatajko, submitted), we focused on how staff and youth participants spoke about and understood the use of sport activities in sport-for-development programs in Lusaka, Zambia. Our findings illuminated that the sport-for-development programs examined had a preferred sport, football (commonly known as
soccer in North America), and that football was the prevalent sport and was preferred because of its feasibility, sustainability, and cultural meaning in Zambia. Football was utilized functionally by the organizations as a pathway for boys to play professional football, and thus programs focused on sport development. Given that football, which is generally considered to be heavily gendered and segregated, was chosen as the preferential activity for programs, boys became the primary beneficiaries of the programs. These findings suggested that, by predominantly using a sport activity that is best suited to a particular group (boys) and that focuses on sport development, other intended participants in the program might have been excluded.

From a critical occupational approach it must be considered that there may be negative consequences to using sports in development programs, e.g., some youth may not like, want, or be able to participate in sports or in a particular dominant sport or as Friesen (2010) comments that “like any language, sport in its modern, global form originated in a specific socio-cultural context, was spread by economic, military, political, and religious means, and may displace local traditions and homogenize cultures” (p. 31). Furthermore, as pointed out by Friesen (2010), the belief that sport is a universal language does not consider, as with any development tool or cultural practice, that sport engenders potentially oppressive power relations and ideologies which may silence or marginalize the less powerful. Thus, it was the purpose of this study to examine how sport-for-development ideologies and practices in Zambia shape the participation of youth using a critical occupational approach.

2.1 Critical occupational approach to research

As described in Njelesani, Gibson, Nixon, Cameron, and Polatajko (under review), a critical occupational approach can be used to examine the assumptions and ideologies underlying human activity, how knowledge is re-produced when engaging in occupations, who controls knowledge production, how an occupation is chosen, and the social, cultural, and political contexts of occupations. Occupations are groups of activities and tasks of everyday life, named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture (CAOT, 1997, p. 34). Occupations refer to all manner of activity in which a
person participates over the course of a day, week, month, year, or life. In addition to paid work, occupations include such things as caring for oneself or one’s children, attending school, cleaning the house, or playing sports.

A critical occupational approach locates occupation as a *site of knowledge production* that is, active political sites where meanings are generated and contested (Njelesani et al., under review). Understanding knowledge re/production involves an exploration of what knowledge is re/produced, how it is re/produced, the context in which it is re/produced, the way it is organized, and the systems that control what is produced (Gibbons, 1994). When using a critical occupational approach in this study, the youth and staff were seen as active in re/producing the ideologies that underpin the use of sport activities in sport-for-development programs.

A critical occupational approach is particularly useful for the study of sport-for-development because sport-for-development programs use sport as a primary means of achieving their goals, and sports are occupations. Furthermore, this approach answers the above identified call for critical research (Kay, 2009, Donnelly, 2008) in sport-for-development research.

### 2.2 Occupational justice

The construct of occupational justice is inherent in a critical occupational approach in that it juxtaposes moral, ethical, and political ideas of justice and occupation and addresses issues of socio-cultural processes that inhibit people from participating in occupations. It is congruent with critical social science in that the conception of occupational justice is aligned with critical theory interests in diversity and its critiques of universal theories (Townsend & Whiteford, 2005) and occupational injustices (i.e., when occupational justices are violated) are seen as being socially constructed (Wilcock, 2005).

In this paper, our application of occupational justice is a critical one in that we use it to examine how the dominance of particular ideologies may lead to certain kinds of injustices that may not be easily recognized by the actors involved. Furthermore, as occupational justice recognizes that occupation is situated in and influenced by the
prevailing social, economic, and political forces, the construct is in accord with the importance of context that is embedded within a critical approach. Thibeault (2007) cautions us to use occupational justice terms with caution, explaining that they have the potential to polarize and misconstrue the aims and objectives of governments, agencies, and communities that may not actively intend to exclude. We recognize that occupational injustices do not always occur in a willful way, yet they do occur, so in order not to ascribe fault or blame at the level of the local organization or individual in this study we focused on examining ideologies being re/produced at the macro-level in sport-for-development in the Zambian context.

2.3 Zambian context

As identified by Sugden (2006), “those wishing to use sport to promote non-sporting social reform need first to carefully dissect the nature of the sport experience in both its natural setting and its broader social and historical context” (p. 222). For the purpose of our paper, we provide a brief summary of the key factors to be considered in the Zambian sport-for-development context. Zambia is a country in Southern Africa that gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1964. The country is culturally diverse with over 70 tribes that enjoy an amicable co-existence. Thus, Zambia is highly regarded as a peaceful country. Christianity has been central to Zambia since its introduction in the mid-nineteenth century by European colonial explorers. In the 1991 Constitution, Zambia was declared a Christian nation, which opened the door to evangelizing the nation and strengthening the acknowledgment that Christianity is a powerful force in government and politics (Arnett, 2007). This influence of Christianity on the nation also contributed to “evangelical sport-for-development” (Mwaanga, 2010, p. 62).

Football was introduced to Zambia in the beginning of the 1900s by missionaries, British colonial administrators, and investors (Chipande, 2010), and therefore is not considered to be a traditional game. However, today it is seen as essential to Zambian heritage and is the national sport (Banda, 2010). Although football is highly valued in Zambia there is little funding available for national or professional teams, causing the best players to leave home to play in Europe (Darby, 2004). One of the most significant points in the
history of football in Zambia was the 1993 air crash in which the Zambian national football team was killed en route to a World Cup qualifying match. This loss of footballers who were on the verge of international acclaim created a sense of national loss, so much so that the president announced a week of national mourning (Darby, 2004).

Zambia was selected as the site for our research because it currently has a greater number of local and international well established sport-for-development organizations than other countries (Lindsey & Banda, 2011). Second, existing research partnerships were already in place. The University of Toronto had previously collaborated with the University of Zambia (UNZA). This history of the University of Toronto and UNZA’s partnership in conjunction with the first author’s personal connections, described below, built a point of entry into the sport-for-development field. Third, the first author, being married to a Zambian and having support from an extended family living in Zambia, had a positionality that differed from that of the other authors. This positionality significantly decreased logistical challenges associated with global research, increased the feasibility of staying in-country for an extended period of time, and provided a level of familiarity and comfort with the Zambian context.

3 Methodology

As described in our companion paper (Njelesani, et al., submitted), our study used a critical occupational approach (Njelesani, et al., under review) and a qualitative case study design (Stake, 2008). Ethics approval was granted from the Research Ethics Boards at the University of Toronto and the University of Zambia. As described in detail in the companion paper Njelesani et al. (submitted), data were generated through the use of multiple qualitative methods, including individual interviews, field notes taken during observations of program activities, and document analysis.

As also described in detail in Njelesani et al. (submitted), data analysis consisted of multiple analytical techniques drawn from Miles and Huberman (1994), Stake (2006), and Saldana (2009). However, there were important differences in analysis, given the
differing research purposes. In the companion paper we analyzed the form, function, and meaning of sport-for-development occupations from the perspectives of the participants. Analysis reported here focused on exploring the underlying ideologies. To carry out our analysis, we asked questions of the data, including:

- What are the relevant socio-cultural structures and processes that may mediate and constrain participants’ perspectives?
- What assumptions underpin the ongoing valorization of some occupations and the rejection of others?
- What power relations are at play?
- Whose interests do the occupations serve?

We also wrote reflexive and analytical memos (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008) as an analytic strategy to help us think about how the emerging results shed light on the ideological beliefs that may be contributing to re/producing occupational injustices.

Together, these analytical techniques helped to make participants’ beliefs explicit. Once beliefs were made explicit, overarching ideologies were revealed. Then, an examination was made of how these ideologies influenced knowledge re/production in relation to the occupations incorporated into the sport-for-development programs as detailed in the findings section below.

### 3.1 Positionality of the researchers

*Positionality* is a term used to indicate the idea that people are defined “not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed” (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, p. 164). Positionality is always considered in relation to the place the researcher occupies with respect to her or his participants as well as in the world. Because this was a multi-authored study, it is recognized that the researchers held multiple positions in relation to the context of the research. The majority of the participants were black Zambians who were living in a
middle-income country, identified as Christians, worked or participated in a sport-for-development program, and were athletes. Their positionalities were in contrast to the Canadian researchers, all of whom were white females conducting critical occupational science research and living in a high-income country. Additional positionalities that the first author held in relation to the participants and other researchers on the team was that of being married to a Zambian and having a Zambian surname but living outside of Zambia, and not identifying as an athlete or coach.

We explicitly dealt with the different positionalities as a team by discussing our positionalities during team meetings. Furthermore, the first author wrote reflexive memos to try and understand how staff and youth participants saw the issues in the context of who they were (sport coaches and athletes) and where they were (participating in the sport-for-development field in Zambia). To better understand the participants’ positionalities, we drew on the experiences of a formally appointed advisor from the University of Zambia and of informal Zambian advisors who brought alternative perspectives. The role of the advisors was to ensure we did not reproduce oppressive patterns or come to erroneous conclusions because of false interpretations of the context.

4 Findings and discussion

As detailed in Njelesani et al. (submitted), case studies were conducted with five sport-for-development organizations in Lusaka, Zambia. The organizations had varying missions; however, all organizations held the increased participation of girls as a program aim. In-depth interviews were conducted with 27 participants (three to six from each organization). The 15 staff participants were 19 to 54 years of age, and the majority of these participants had a background in playing or coaching competitive sports. The majority of program staff had previously been program youth and had received advanced education (i.e., university and post-graduate) and training in sport management and coaching. All of the 12 youth participants were 18 to 27 years of age. In presenting the data below, pseudonyms are used to maintain participant anonymity.
Findings are discussed at two levels: the first level captures themes of what the participants spoke about. Three themes were generated: *on the sidelines, poverty and location is limiting play,* and *parental noise.* The second level of findings names beliefs and ideologies that appeared to shape the participation of youth in programming. Three prevalent ideologies were identified: *sport benefits all, good people do but don’t do,* and *sport is the way out.*

### 4.1 On the sidelines

Staff encouraged all youths to attend their programs, but boys and girls with disabilities, and girls more broadly did not always participate in these programs. This was due in part because football, which is a heavily gendered activity in Zambia, was the prioritized activity. Noah, a staff member, talked about how the community supported football for boys, as it was a boys’ sport, but did not support the participation of girls:

> Here in Zambia, I have seen that it [football] is a male-dominated discipline, so they feel that it is reserved (more) for the males than for the females. When it comes to the traditional views like maybe if girls get involved they will have difficulty in delivery of children or problems with bearing children. They would also say that girls would have difficulties getting married. They did not see the whole idea or importance of her participating, but for the male folks, they would just encourage them to go. With women they would make a barrier so that they can’t.

Although participants talked about wanting to include all youth, in some instances children with disabilities were perceived as making the decision themselves not to participate because of their own limitations. Chabala, a male staff member, said: “Some disabled children sometimes don’t want sports because they feel it is for the abled ones.”

In addition to identifying perceived barriers to participation at the level of the individual, staff participants also considered barriers at the program level, such as the need for special resources:

> We make sure that there is inclusion. We include them at different levels, but it is very difficult to bring everyone, all the disabilities on board because of the nature of the equipment we need to use and also the skills that we need to have. (Alen, staff member)
In contrast to the others, Bryan, a male staff member, thought the lack of participation of boys and girls with disabilities rested not on the individual or on the lack of physical resources but on the philosophy of the organization and the Zambian social context:

Children with disabilities in Zambia, from realities here, are sidelined from participating in sports. The issue of integration is something that we are lacking from the program. The teams are completely separate teams.

The finding of the exclusion of youth in sport-for-development programs based on gender and ability resonates with Giulianotti (2004) who argues that sport-for-development “is unnecessarily exclusionary towards other social cleavages” (p. 357), and with Beacom (2009) who suggests that greater opportunities are needed for persons with disabilities.

4.2 Poverty and location is limiting play

In our study, we found that there was an over concentration of initiatives in cities, leaving out youth living in rural areas, who most often have extensive household and work commitments, and those who are the poorest with less opportunities to participate. Not including rural youth was attributed by staff to the fact that coaching and playing fields were not available in rural areas and because sport was not seen to be as valued an activity in rural areas by the community members themselves. Mary, a staff member, said: “Some rural government schools don’t have sport, so we don’t do any programs with those schools because the schools think that sport should be saved for the weekend, and it’s not worthwhile activities.” Youth who had household and work commitments were, in the eyes of the staff, not participating as a result of these commitments. “You find, even in the afternoon, for children to attend sports it was difficult because this is a rural set up. In the afternoon, the children would have to go and assist in the fields” (Percy, staff member).

Living in poverty was a reality for most of the youth participants; however, many of the poorest youth in Zambia live in rural areas (Arnett, 2007), but there is less of a concentration of programs in these areas. Staff and youth participants recognized the absence of poor youth in the programs. “At the end of the day, you find that the economic statuses of the communities’ [make] people leave the program. They probably have to go
and start work somewhere” (Francis, staff member). Kidd (2008) recognized this lack of programming available to rural youth. One finding emanating from a conference with sport-for-development stakeholders in Zambia noted that “few NGOs venture outside the capital of Lusaka, so that while children in some Lusaka communities may receive training from several NGOs, children in rural areas receive none” (p. 377).

4.3 Parental noise

Staff and youth considered parents’ perspectives to be a nuisance because parents held power over their children and could stop them from attending programs, thus limiting their participation. Mwenzi, a female staff member, described some of the parental concerns about programs: “So if people don’t understand why you are there, parents come and start making noise: ‘Why were my children removing clothes like that [when changing into uniform]?’” Aaron, a youth participant, also described parental reactions to these programs: “Yes, some girls are allowed to come, others are not, but they come on their own and when they go back home their parents scold them.”

Participants said parents were concerned about children participating in sports because these occupations were not considered traditional roles and were seen as less valuable than participating in other activities such as school studies and home responsibilities. “Sometimes parents refuse them to join, saying it is a sheer waste of time, and that maybe you did not go to the (playing field) but went somewhere else” (Cheyenne, youth participant).

In our study, the issue of parents’ attitudes towards sport was compounded for sport-for-development organizations by the lack of trust within communities more generally:

Some parents feel sports is just a sheer waste of time because the child is supposed to be in school and not playing sports. Other parents will prefer their children to be in their houses because of the thought of their children being abused. I think also the issue is that some people would like to see the girl child being where they can be seen because there is an issue of safety. Others fear that you might pick bad vices from sports. (Francis, staff member)

Youth participants talked about the internal conflict they faced when choosing between their parents’ and their own values of sport. Jonathan, a youth participant, described the
struggle he faced when choosing between his parents’ wishes and his desire to play sports:

You may find that at times you are supposed to do something for the family. At the same time, you are wanted to go and do some activities. When it comes to times like that you have to choose, where should I go? Help out the family or should I go and do the activity? So I think it is very critical because you feel like when I go out there to do those activities, when I come back home what will I say to my parents or what are they going to do to me? So you feel like you just have to stop the activity.

The idea of parents and adult community members being more skeptical about girls’ participation in sport activities under this theme are congruent with the findings of a study by Kay and Spaaij (2011) who found the obstacles to using sport as a tool for women’s development included concerns about women’s safety, competing obligations (e.g., food, shelter, sexual division of labour), as well as issues surrounding gender and sexuality norms. Similarly, in the Zambian context, parents’ tended to control their daughters activities more so than their sons, often for fear of harm from men or their daughters being tempted to engage in an activity seen as harmful or sinful. The findings are also similar to those of Brady (2005) who indicated that, in her studies of sport organizations in Kenya and Egypt, girls were interested and motivated to engage in sports programming, yet engaging girls was challenging largely because of parental concerns and social norms concerning the appropriateness of girls’ participation in sports.

4.4 Ideologies and beliefs

A number of explanations were offered by the participants to justify and support why individuals were on the sidelines and not participating in programming, why having lesser economic means and living in a rural area were limiting to participating in programming, and why parents were considered as a source of noise. These explanations were considered as identifying the prevailing beliefs and interrelated ideologies. Three beliefs were identified: sport benefits all, good people do but don’t do, and sport is the way out.
4.4.1 Sport benefits all

Congruent with the sport-for-development movement (Darnell, 2012), a belief that sport benefits all was found to prevail. This belief holds the idea that sport has universally positive inherent benefits that appeal to all youth, as Bryan, a staff member, put it:

We are coming in to fill the gap, to say sports and education are very important because a child that is into sports has the physical benefit of it and also education comes in, like we teach life skills, where a child will learn how to make a decision in his or her life, that progresses his or her life.

This belief was evident in that sport, in particular football, was used uncritically, as it was seen as an activity that was believed to be appropriate for all youth. As Noah, a staff member, said: “I would say the most prominent is football, there is only one”.

As this belief contributed to one activity being universal and implicitly accepted, less consideration was given to the unique needs and desires of other youth. Alen, a staff member, explained why boys and girls with disabilities were not participating: “We need a special ball for them to play, and we need to have special rules for them to engage and such rules are not available most of the time.”

This belief contributed to program staff perceiving that since football was the most widely played sport, its characteristics — feasibility, sustainability, and cultural significance — were inherently positive qualities that should serve the range of youth participants well. However, the existence of such a belief contributed to the exclusion of groups of youth, because from a critical occupational approach, occupations can be both inclusive and excluding. Francis, a staff member, recognized the exclusion of girl youth by virtue of the program incorporating the sport of football:

If you are dealing with women sports, especially in rural areas, it is very difficult at times to have a turn out or girls participating because the tradition’s aspect of it is that they should be involved more in the kitchen and be ready to take care of their houses instead of running around in the streets playing football. That kind of thing brings down female participation.

The belief that sport is appealing for all youth and that all youth should be included in programming was evident in the program documents reviewed. For example, one of case
study three’s documents described the target youth for their program to be children with disabilities, girls and women, street children, and children living with HIV/AIDS.

This belief that sport benefits all is congruent with beliefs previously identified in the sport-for-development literature including that sport will improve the welfare of Others through development (Darnell, 2012) and sport is a universal language (Donnelly, 2008). These beliefs contain similarities in the ideas that using sport as a tool in programming can lead to development outcomes seen as beneficial, and that sport activities are universally valued activities that people should be doing. Furthermore, they are tied to an inclusion ideology because they aim to include all groups of youth, no matter the persons’ ability, economic means, location, or gender.

### 4.4.2 Good people do but don’t do

The belief that sport benefits all was tied to the second belief, good people do but don’t do. Because sports, especially football, was seen as having universally positive inherent benefits, it was seen as a deterrent to engaging in those activities seen as not good (e.g., drinking, drugs, etc.) or unChristian-like in the Zambian context. This belief was talked about for both boys and girls. What was different were which activities were seen as better to participate in for girls and for boys. Jonathan, a youth participant, talked about how football was not seen as a sport for girls to play by parents: “Parents and guardians do not support the girls to come and join us. They say girls cannot play football with guys.”

This belief is congruent with the dominant gender ideology that consists of ideas and beliefs about masculinity, femininity, and male-female relationships (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009, p. 17). The dominant gender ideology in the Zambian context emphasizes that football is a sport for boys to play and is not appropriate for girls to play. This belief is also congruent with the dominant Christian ideology in Zambia that emphasizes what are considered acceptable activities for Christians. This was seen when girls were not encouraged to play football by their parents because the attire was perceived to resemble clothing that a sex worker would wear and therefore not an activity
congruent with Christian values. These dominant ideologies in Zambia contributed to football being a heavily gendered and segregated activity.

This belief that good people do but don't do and the interrelating ideologies privileged some boys but contributed to occupational injustices for others as it led to the prioritization of a narrow range of occupations, leaving girl youth, youth living in rural areas, poor youth, and boys and girls with disabilities less able to participate in programming. Other occupations that may have facilitated participation, such as dancing and traditional games, were largely absent from programs, thereby reinforcing the incorporation of football as the priority sport into the sport-for-development programming. Traditional games highlighted in the program documents that we reviewed were not a focus of program activities. Other than benefiting youth of differing abilities, the participation in traditional games could be a way for youth to learn vocational skills, which could address the need for economic empowerment expressed by participants. For example, traditional games use equipment made out of local materials which means that, before playing the games, youth learn how to construct the necessary equipment (e.g., spears made from long sticks to play the game Tindi) and thereby have the possibility to learn a new skill set or craft (e.g., wood working).

4.4.3 Sport is the way out

The prevalent belief, stated by many of the participants, was the importance of excelling at sports so as to win, because winning was seen as the way out of poverty and achieving success. This belief is tied to competition, success, and sport development. Aaron, a youth participant, recognized the opportunity to move on to playing football internationally: “At the moment I am based in Lusaka, but as I go on, I think I will have [sporting] chances outside the country”.

This belief served to exclude girls, rural youth, poor youth, and girls and boys with disabilities; that is, it reproduced the notion that non-disabled boys who could win the game should engage in sports, and other groups of youths should be spectators. This was

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2 Tindi is a Zambian traditional game. The word Tindi means to throw an object.
most obvious during the observation sessions of program activities where most commonly no boys or girls with disabilities were seen to be participating in the football matches and girl youth of all ages were grouped together on one team and played only against the youngest aged boys’ team.

Sports, in particular football, was seen to be optimal for non-disabled athletic males, so much so that the program was seen as a success when boy youth made it out of Zambia to play professional football abroad. Jonathan, a youth participant, agreed that this was an important goal of the program:

I really want to have a chance of becoming somebody in life, doing something, to be specific, being a football player, doing something that can keep me busy in my life. Because when I am doing these activities, I do them with all my heart, and I think that this is the kind of thing that I have been wanting to do in my life, and I look forward to doing them even on a higher level, even national level.

This aim of playing professionally contributed to a prioritization of the sport of football, as football was understood to be the sport that would lead to the greatest chance of success in playing abroad. Interestingly, the belief that sport is the way out could include other occupations, sports or not, but these were not mentioned by participants, presumably as the rewards were seen as higher for men’s football. For example, at a time in Zambian history when a Zambian female boxer, Esther Phiri, had achieved international boxing titles (Meier & Saavedra, 2009), no one mentioned her story nor did they talk about boxing as a sport. We conjecture that she was not discussed because her success differed from that which was seen as ideal – that of a man playing professional football abroad.

In relation to this finding, other occupations that could contribute to the identified need for economic prosperity and that were connected to the highly valued sport of football were not made explicit in programs. Being a professional player was seen as the ideal; but professional players need coaches, therapists, and others to support them. Even though the economic and social rewards were higher for playing men’s football professionally, making it in the world of football could include participating in other occupations, which could be a possibility for a greater diversity of youth.
This aim of playing football professionally necessitates that programs focus on developing skills essential for high performance in sports (i.e., sport development). With this sport development focus comes the idea that to be successful requires youth to have not only a level of sport-specific bodily skills but also knowledge of the official and unofficial rules and aims of the sport activity as well as the time, resources, and family support. Although not an expressed aspect of the missions of the five organizations studied, nor an articulated goal in the documents we reviewed, it was clear from the participants, both staff and youth, that development of sport skills was an important focus of programming. Further, participants suggested that this development of sport skills was working and that these skills opened career opportunities for some of the youth. From a critical perspective, this was found to be only a select few, namely, a very small proportion of athletic non-disabled boys living in urban areas. As was heard from the participants, the program was seen as a success when these boys attained economic prosperity through achieving a career in sports, most especially through becoming a professional football player abroad. These findings support Burnett’s (2009) discussion of competitive frameworks in the South African sport-for-development context, which resulted in sport development programs occurring to such an extent that she suggested social development aims were being compromised.

The focus on sport development contributed to re/producing issues of occupational injustices for some youth by marginalizing those who did not conform because they were unable to compete, sidelining them from playing. Those youth for whom the occupations were not as suitable were relegated to participate in less-valued activities where there was less choice (e.g., playing on segregated teams or acting as scorekeepers). Relegating youth to participate in less-valued activities may reproduce or reinforce occupational injustices rather than contest or resist them. The practice of centering sport-for-development on activities that may lead to occupational injustices can be considered counter-productive in the sport-for-development arena as it would seem to perpetuate disempowering behaviours and attitudes and reinforce gender and ability stereotypes that the programs are attempting to overcome through their empowerment-focused programming.
Gender and ability were not the only factors that were associated with the belief of *sport is the way out* that was tied to competition, success, and sport development. Class and rural living also played important roles. Boys and girls from rural areas and those with household responsibilities encountered occupational injustices based on the idea that, in order to win, programs were best suited to youth who could make sports their priority and who were available to attend all sessions because they had the necessary economic means and community support. The inability to participate because youth needed to spend time at home was seen as a lack of commitment; however, this lack of participation may be related to social positions and broader socioeconomic inequalities.

The belief that *sport is the way out* is congruent with the dominant class, ability, and gender ideologies and is influenced by broader systemic issues, such as endemic poverty. Class ideology “consists of beliefs that people use to understand economic inequalities and make sense of their own position in an economic hierarchy in society” (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009, p. 18). This belief connects sports positively with capitalism, and its competitive system of economic rewards is therefore related to the ideology of the dominant class, which emphasizes that economic success is necessary as a way out of poverty and can benefit not only the individual but also her or his entire community. In sport-for-development this success is garnered when boys achieve a career in sports, most especially through becoming a professional football player abroad. This belief is also congruent with the dominant gender and ability ideologies in Zambia that emphasize what are considered appropriate activities for boys and girls and persons with disabilities of both genders to do, in that *sport is the way out* is only considered a possibility for non-disabled boy youth.

The exclusion of particular groups of youth was mentioned in the interviews, as Chabala, a male staff member, put it: “When you look at women and girls all along they have been side lined and they have not been offered opportunities to participate in sports”. However, suggestions were not provided for ways that this inequality might be addressed or at least mitigated through using different activities to make participation for girls, rural youth, poor youth, and girls and boys with disabilities easier. There are a number of possible reasons for this. First, the case studies occurred in a context where being critical
may be considered inappropriate, particularly for a girl. Participants may also not have said anything negative because they do not see anything negative. That does not mean they would not welcome changes that they may not have previously considered as they may be largely unreflective of their assumptions and beliefs regarding what is considered the right activities for youths to do.

4.5 Interrelation of the prevailing beliefs

The belief that good people do but don’t do contains ideas of what are appropriate activities for boys and girls to do in the Zambian context both fit with and at times was at odds with the other two prevailing beliefs. First, this belief is similar to sport is the way out in its constituent ideas about what girls and boys should do. Both espouse an idea that sport is an activity for boys. However, the idea that girls should not be playing football runs contradictory to the belief that all types of sports benefit all groups of youths which emphasizes that all youth should be included no matter their gender. These contradictions across beliefs and the interrelated ideologies that are reflected in the occupations used in sport-for-development programs occur in part because the incorporated sporting occupations have many forms, functions, and meanings as discussed in the companion paper (Njelesani et al., submitted). Therefore, in considering the three prominent beliefs, that emerged in the findings, the occupations incorporated in sport-for-development programs can be seen as both re/producing and challenging dominant ability, gender, religious, and class ideologies in Zambia, which is congruent with the idea that occupations could be seen as promoting health and wellness or promoting harm.

Despite the rhetoric discussed by participants and contained in program documents of how sports has benefits for all and therefore all youth should be participating in programming, the overriding belief in this study was that of sport is the way out. This belief was tied to competition, success, and sport development and seemed to be in contrast to the beliefs related to inclusion. The belief that sport is the way out also superseded the other beliefs as sport development for a small group of boy athletes was seen as a greater priority than programming that included youth from a broad array of groups. That this belief was a priority became clear based on where resources and
activities were prioritized in the case studies.

The emphasis on sport development influenced organizational priorities such that organizations expended many resources on implementing activities for a select few, leading to insufficient resources to enable other people to participate in activities that were important to them. This was most obviously seen when staff talked about the lack of participation of boys and girls with disabilities as a result of not having the appropriate equipment or training and not sending coaches to rural areas where greater factors contributed to youth’s ability to participate as Mary a staff said as noted in full above: “Some rural government schools don’t have sport, so we don’t do any programs with those schools.”

That sport is the way out was the predominant ideological belief can be understood given the positionalities of participants coming from the field of sport coaching and athletics, all within a current culture of programming that idealizes and prioritizes sport activities. Furthermore, coming from a place where few other opportunities offer the same financial gains, the idea of focusing on sport development in hopes of someone becoming a professional player to improve his economic status becomes, perhaps, unarguable.

These three beliefs were each identified within the sport-for-development context in Lusaka, because of their opposing ideas about inclusion versus winning they contribute to the tension between the use of sport occupations for social development (i.e., sport-for-development) and the development of sport skills (i.e., sport development). This blurring of sport development and sport-for-development seen in the Zambian sport-for-development context under study supports the idea that sport development and sport-for-development are most often not mutually exclusive (Beacom, 2007) and are often blurred in rhetoric and practice (Kidd, 2008). According to Kidd (2008), “while policy and promise employ the language of development, the bulk of funds continue to be invested in sports” (p. 373). The findings here support Kidd’s 2008 predictions that the programs examined would be ideologically and structurally preoccupied with sport development and would face strong expectations from staff and many youth alike to focus on sport development.
Despite the practice of sport development being prioritized in programming, this implicit goal was not recognized, or at least not acknowledged. Failing to make this goal both explicit and legitimate undermines the value that sport development holds for some youth in these programs and their communities. The potential to achieving improved economic means that football holds makes it a very enticing choice for both staff and youth and leads to implications for policy and practice.

5 Implications for policy and practice

We have examined ideological beliefs in order to gain a better understanding of how the beliefs shape inequalities in participation as a component of occupational injustice. In confronting the ideological beliefs, the findings from our study support the idea that what appears to be an unintentional occupational injustice contributes to a lack of participation and exclusion, and thus must be at least in part addressed through policies and strategies that enable inclusion (Whiteford & Townsend, 2011). At the policy level, the findings of this study have implications for policy makers in their decisions, starting from which organizations are funded, to how funding is given to particular activities, to having policies that require organizations, to mainstream programs for marginalized and vulnerable youth. Given how sport-for-development is situated in the Zambian context with influences at all levels, we also acknowledge that with inclusion comes the potential for new forms of exclusion, despite inclusive intentions. There are only limited resources, so there may be less time for individual sport training as a coach works with a larger group. With less time, the quality of the programs may suffer. However, as the programs normally operate under a peer model, these ideas could lead to new opportunities for peers to extend the range of skills that they have.

Sport-for-development policies and practices can also strive to be more open, inviting, and familiar to youth who do not have the ideal abilities, resources, sport expertise, or knowledge. This could be done by trying to make the many rules, expectations, and activities more flexible and inclusive. This approach helps to open up space for participation, diversity, equity, and inclusion through occupation by ensuring that a multitude of factors are taken into consideration and that activity choices are not made on
the assumption that programs are only for boys’ sport development or are only beneficial to boys. This approach is congruent with many strategies (e.g., seeking community “buy-in”) already underlying sport-for-development planning; however, it is unique because it focuses specifically on the occupations - the sports.

Beyond sport-for-development organizations, other agencies have a role to play in enhancing occupational justice for youth. Particularly needed are programs that empower youth who do not participate in sport-for-development and which could help them become socially included in a way that fits their resources and activity interests. This involves identifying stakeholders who should be included in the network and who have yet to be approached. One idea is to have greater involvement of schools because many youth are connected to these institutions.

Promoting occupational justice might not be at the forefront of the staff’s minds because they tended not to see this injustice in the first place and because there has been little dialogue about this topic. It is difficult to address injustices that are not discussed or recognized. This notion necessitates the recognition and questioning of the dominant ideologies operating within sport-for-development and how these influence occupational justice for youth. One suggestion is more dialogue that asks the questions that have largely gone unasked to date. Questions could include “What can sport-for-development do to make the world a more just and equitable place?” This dialogue could occur through public engagement frameworks, wherein members of the public are involved in the agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy-forming activities of organizations (Rowe & Frewer, 2005). Such dialogue could potentially help program staff to better recognize the occupational needs of program youth. Furthermore, dialogue with colleagues is also suggested, as it is easier to consider new ideas and to work through how these can be applied to the realities of practice when openly discussed with others. Finally, there could be dialogue between researchers and practitioners. The rationale behind this last idea is that a purely academic emphasis fails to attend to practice realities and does not lead to uptake in practice. It is important for practitioners not to be overly reliant on the existing practice or to perpetuate what has always been done. This approach will not bring into focus the advances in knowledge and understandings produced by
those in academia that can be of value in modifying existing practices (Molke & Laliberte Rudman, 2009). The suggestions described illustrate that such discussions with all stakeholders are requisite for aligning sport-for-development with occupational justice that will bring youth the benefit of participating in sport-related occupations.

5.1 Limitations

In addition to the limitations cited in Njelesani et al. (submitted), another limitation that particularly influenced the examination of this research was that the case studies occurred in a context where being critical could be considered inappropriate, particularly for a girl. This fear of being perceived as critical is rooted in Zambian society which some argue is patriarchal (Mulikita & Siame, 2005). This made it particularly challenging to find ways to prompt participants to offer greater detail and more in-depth responses as to why or why not the program activities worked for them.

5.2 Future research development

This study highlighted the ways that dominant ideologies and beliefs underlining sport-for-development programs limit youths’ participation. Few studies have explored how ideologies and beliefs shape the participation of youth. Therefore, further exploration could focus on how youth accommodate and resist these ideologies and beliefs, particularly youth who have not participated in sport-for-development programs. The inclusion of youth who do not attend these programs could provide important information about how dominant ideologies and beliefs shape their lack of participation.

The findings also draw attention to the concept of occupational justice for youth who are considered to be the most marginalized and vulnerable in Zambia. This finding necessitates an exploration more broadly than in the sport-for-development context alone of how their occupational justice is enabled or not enabled in other contexts (e.g., education, health). These studies would call attention to occupational justice for youth and could help to uncover ways to move forward with Zambia’s Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP), particularly the objectives of increasing women’s
participation in national development and enabling persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of life (SNDP, 2011, pp. 6-7).

6 Conclusion

In this study we used a critical occupational approach to create new ways of thinking about and uncovering dominant ideologies and beliefs that have been largely unexamined in sport-for-development. We have brought to light three ideological beliefs that may shape the participation of youth in sport-for-development programs: sport benefits all, good people do but don’t do, and sport is the way out. Taken together, these beliefs existing within the Zambian sport-for-development movement appear to be competing with one another. While the first two appear consistent with the formal aims of sport-for-development as they envision every child reaping benefits from playing sport and depict sport as a good activity in which to participate, the third belief is more akin to sport development that prioritizes competition and elite-level participation.

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Chapter 7
Integration and Conclusion

1 Introduction

Some four years ago I became aware of the sport-for-development movement. Being a budding occupational scientist, I was intrigued by the idea of occupation-based, and most especially single occupation-based, international development initiatives. My understanding of human occupation suggested to me that such programs could be at once powerful and problematic, and so I set out to explore the role that occupation played in sport-for-development programs.

The results of that quest are presented in this manuscript-style dissertation. Comprised of seven chapters, this dissertation includes five papers (chapters 2–6) that are either in press or in various stages of consideration for publication. These papers are all co-authored, in most instances by the members of my thesis supervisory committee. However, in each case I am the lead author, reflecting the primacy of my role in their creation and the ideas presented.

In chapter 2, “An Occupational Perspective of Single-Occupation-Based International Development Programs” (Njelesani, Cameron, & Polatajko, 2012), a published paper, I present a scoping review that examined the breadth and scope of single occupation-based international development programs. The findings from that work revealed that the majority of occupations being used in the programs were sport occupations. These findings contributed to the decision to focus my research on sport-for-development organizations.

My training as an occupational scientist influenced my decision to carry out my research using an occupational perspective, in addition to my having found that the international development and occupational science literature was devoid of any analysis focused on the role occupations themselves play. It soon became apparent that the term occupational perspective lacked conceptual clarity. This provided the impetus to explore the meanings of an occupational perspective. In conjunction with a classmate, and in collaboration with
two internationally recognized occupational scientists, I sought to make explicit the specifics of an occupational perspective. The result was chapter 3, a co-authored paper titled “Articulating an Occupational Perspective” (Njelesani, Tang, Jonsson, & Polatajko, 2012). This paper describes the work done to create a definition of the term occupational perspective and its underlying assumptions. It examined how the term was being defined, described, and applied within the literature and identified gaps in definitions. The paper proposed that an occupational perspective be defined as a way of looking at or thinking about patterns of doing. I used this definition and the identified underlying assumptions to frame the occupational perspective that guided the work presented in this dissertation.

My a priori sense that occupation-based programs could be at once both powerful and problematic led me to adopt a critical stance in my occupational perspective. Again the literature failed to provide a clear description, so I undertook to articulate the specifics of a critical occupational approach to research. The results of this endeavor appear in chapter 4, a paper titled “Towards a Critical Occupational Approach to Research” (Njelesani, Gibson, Nixon, Cameron, & Polatajko, under review). This paper describes a critical occupational approach to research that serves to illuminate how knowledge is re/produced when engaging in occupations and the assumptions and ideologies underlying human activity. The approach was developed through combining occupational and critical social science perspectives.

With these tools in hand I was set to explore the role that occupation played in sport-for-development programs. I undertook the five case studies presented in this dissertation. The results of this research are presented in two manuscripts, both submitted for publication. The first of these is presented in chapter 5 and is titled “A Critical Occupational Approach: Offering Insights on the Sport-for-development Playing Field” (Njelesani, Cameron, Gibson, Nixon, & Polatajko, submitted). The paper describes how staff and youth participants speak about and understand the use of sport activities in sport-for-development programs. The findings identified that the programs were essentially concerned with a single sport, football, and illuminated for whom the programs were prioritized (athletic boys) and thereby who was excluded (girls, non-athletic boys, boys and girls with disabilities). These findings demonstrate that examining
sport-for-development using a critical occupational approach provides insights and understanding about the interrelationship between the form (football), function (alternative to engaging in negatively valued activities and path that could lead boys to a career), and meaning (part of Zambian sporting culture, more meaningful activity for boys to play than girls) of the occupations used in programming.

The second of these papers is presented in chapter 6 and it discusses the ideologies and practices that were identified in the sport-for-development programs that shaped the participation of youth. The findings of this paper, “Sport-for-development: A Level Playing Field?” (Njelesani, Gibson, Cameron, Nixon, & Polatajko, submitted), illuminate three themes that serve as ideological beliefs. The first, sport benefits all, contributed to the practice of sport being used uncritically as an activity for all youth. The second, good people do but don’t do, perpetuated what were considered acceptable activities that boys and girls could do in the local context. Finally, a belief that sport is the way out privileged boys who play football as well as athletic non-disabled boys in opposition to girls, poor youth, rural youth, and girls and boys with disabilities. This belief contributed to programs focusing on sport development in efforts for boys to attain the goal of economic prosperity through achieving a career in sports, most especially through becoming a professional football player abroad.

I began the dissertation (chapter 1) with an introduction to the work as a whole. In the introduction I presented the aim, purposes, and methodology of the dissertation. I also explained the choice of Lusaka, Zambia, as the context for the study, clarified key concepts, and described my positionality and the research context. In this concluding chapter, I bring together the key findings from the two results papers (chapters 5 and 6) and discuss their contributions. I point out that the findings of the work not only contribute to a deeper understanding of sport-for-development but also provide support for the use of a critical occupational approach. I then detail the ethical implications and implications of the research findings for policy, practice, and future studies. I conclude with the limitations of the study.
2 Key findings and contributions

At the broadest level, this dissertation has sought to understand the role of occupation in sport-for-development programming using a critical occupational approach. The results of the work, as a whole, have not only produced a deeper understanding of sport-for-development but also have provided support for the use of a critical occupational approach as a methodology and, indirectly, advanced occupational science.

2.1 A deeper understanding of sport-for-development programming in Lusaka

This study yielded many interesting findings regarding the role of occupation in sport-for-development programming. Key among these was the focus on football and the tension this created in the participants between the use of sport occupations for social development (i.e., sport-for-development) and the development of sport skills (i.e., sport development). Although not an expressed aspect of the missions of the five organizations explored in the case studies presented, nor an articulated goal in the documents I reviewed, it was clear from the participants, both staff and youth, that development of sport skills was an important focus of programming. Further, participants suggested that this development of sport skills was working and that these skills opened career opportunities for some of the participants. From a critical perspective, this was found to be only a select few of the athletic non-disabled boys living in urban areas. As was heard from the participants, the program was seen as a success when these boys attained economic prosperity through achieving a career in sports, most especially through becoming a professional football player abroad. This goal appeared to be rooted in the belief that sport is the way out. This belief was tied to competition, success, and sport development, and it seemed to supersede other prevailing ideological beliefs related to inclusion and how sports can benefit all.

This focus on developing youths’ sport skills is generally referred to in the literature as sport development. Sport development involves the development of sport to enhance performance in sport as an end itself (Beacom, 2007) and is founded on competition,
excluding those who are not seen as competitive players. Sport development programs can do a lot for some but there is a limit to whom they can serve, as Kidd (2008) indicates, “they do not engage the majority of people who currently have little opportunity to participate in sports, but devote most of their resources to helping the very best to climb higher up the pyramid” (p. 372).

Despite the practice of sport development being prioritized in programming, this implicit goal was not recognized, or at least not acknowledged. Failing to make this goal explicit or legitimate may undermine the value that sport development holds for some youth in these programs and their communities. The potential for improved economic means that football holds makes it a very enticing choice for both staff and youth. It is the opinion of this author that this aspect of programming should be made explicit and legitimate. In this way the benefits of the program can be highlighted and the disadvantages identified, thereby making them more possible to overcome.

There are a number of disadvantages associated with the belief that sport is the way out in sport-for-development programming where the sport is intended to be a vehicle to achieving social, economic, and political objectives (Beacom, 2007). Explicit aims of sport-for-development programs often include girls, children with disabilities, and vulnerable children, those populations generally excluded from sport development programs. Despite their apparent conflicting aims, sport development and sport-for-development are most often not mutually exclusive (Beacom, 2007) and are often blurred in rhetoric and practice (Kidd, 2008). According to Kidd (2008), “while policy and promise employ the language of development, the bulk of funds continue to be invested in sports” (p. 373). This blurring of sport development and sport-for-development was seen in the Zambian sport-for-development context under study. The findings here support Kidd’s 2008 predictions that the programs examined would be ideologically and structurally preoccupied with sport development and would face strong expectations from staff and many youth alike that the programs focus on sport development.

The findings here suggest that sport development and sport-for-development should not be seen as, or strive to be, mutually exclusive. Rather, programs could articulate multiple
objectives. One objective could explicitly relate to the idea that sport is a means to economic ends and thereby could contribute to the development aims of the program. Sport development as a means to attainment of international development goals is based on the premise that one important feature of development is generating and sustaining a livelihood. This idea is suggested in contrast to the current practice of carrying out sport development but couching it in other terminology or not recognizing the contribution.

This idea of explicitly linking sport development to development aims, including economic gain and not striving to make sport-for-development mutually exclusive from sport development, has not been a significant feature of the sport-for-development/sport development debate. To date this debate has tended to focus on the differentiation between the two (Beacom, 2007). The findings here suggest that sport-for-development programs should acknowledge sport development as one of their programming goals while ensuring their programs also support goals related to inclusion. Anticipated objections to this idea may include donors taking issue if these goals were made explicit; however, with the adoption of greater transparency of the work, then trust, the precondition for effective partnerships between the donor and the organizations, can be nurtured.

What is important to consider in this belief of sport is the way out is that it may work for some people and some purposes, but not for others. Such emphasis on sport development in programs brings with it the notion of who will gain from participation. This makes the radical rethinking of who the program is targeting necessary. This query leads to issues of occupational justice and to the importance of programs having a second objective that includes those youth for whom the sport development aim does not fit.

2.2 A critical occupational approach as methodology

The findings presented in chapters 5 and 6 provide support for the methodology used; adopting a critical occupational approach generated unique findings. Using this approach introduced new knowledge about the interrelationship between the form, function, and meaning of the occupations used in sport-for-development programming. The approach
also illuminated a set of intersecting conditions, some of which were grounded in unexamined ideologies that contributed to prioritizing a narrow range of occupations, leaving girls, youth living in rural areas, poor youth, and boys and girls living with disabilities less able to participate.

One specific novel finding from the study is the dearth of incorporation of different activities into sport-for-development programming in Lusaka so that the activities may have potential benefits (e.g., inclusion of girls and marginalized youth) beyond that of making sport more interesting and attractive. The study found that other occupations that may have provided paths to participation, such as traditional games, were largely absent from programs. Although highlighted in the program documents reviewed, traditional games were not a focus of program activities I observed nor were they spoken about by participants. The privileging of modern sports and those sports most closely tied to the field of physical education may have contributed to traditional games not being prioritized. Other than the benefits of participation for youth of differing abilities, traditional games could be a means for learning vocational skills, which could address the need for economic empowerment expressed by participants. For example, traditional games use equipment made out of local materials, so before learning to play the games, youth learn how to construct the necessary equipment (e.g., spears made from long sticks to play the game Tindi) and thereby learn a new skill set or craft (e.g., wood working).

Another important insight illuminated by using a critical occupational approach was the finding that because football was considered to be a universal activity for youth and was therefore implicitly accepted there was no consideration of the idiosyncrasy associated with this chosen occupation. This finding suggested that football had been widely adopted with very little critical attention to its gendered and ability underpinnings. In relation to this unique finding, the study made an original contribution to the literature, which was that other occupations that could contribute to the identified need for economic prosperity and that were connected to the highly valued sport of football were not made explicit in the programs. The study found that being a professional player was seen as the ideal; but a critical occupational approach introduced the idea that professional players need coaches, therapists, and others to support them. Even though
the economic and social rewards are higher for playing men’s football professionally, making it in the world of football could include participating in other occupations that could involve a greater diversity of youth.

Through using a critical occupational approach, the study went beyond that of previous studies and indicated that in the cases studied, providing input into the form of activities used in sport-for-development stopped at the staff level and excluded youth participants from being involved in decision making. This finding that the choice of occupations used in programming was made solely by staff reinforces the idea that sport-for-development may “serve practitioners as much, if not more, than the people it is intended to serve” (Donnelly et al., 2011, p. 592). As these findings suggested, not directly involving youth in planning could lead to disenchantment and could make some youth less likely to participate as they feel they have no choice or influence.

2.3 Contributions to occupational science

The critical occupational approach used here responds to calls from occupational science for dialogue concerning the merits of a critical perspective to research in occupational science (Kinsella, 2012; Molke, 2009; Park Lala, 2012). Although research from a critical perspective is increasingly being conducted in occupational science (e.g., Beagan & D’Sylva, 2011; Laliberte Rudman & Molke, 2008), no descriptions have previously been introduced that could be used to understand how to proceed in using such an approach to the study of occupation. This dissertation, therefore, is the first to introduce an explicit description, an illustration of components, and an explanation in practical terms of a critical occupational approach.

Another important contribution is the expansion of the scope of occupational science. Thus, this study contributes to the recognition of a fairly new and evolving science. This occurs through identifying the extent to which the concept of occupation is rooted in other disciplines (e.g., sport sociology) that do not necessarily consider themselves as part of occupational science.
3 Ethical considerations, reflections, and implications

The procedures used to ensure the ethics of the study undertaken here were described in detail in the introduction (chapter 1) and then again in each manuscript contained within this thesis, as was appropriate. I reintroduce the topic here, in the final pages of this thesis, to identify ethical issues that arose during the course of the study and to describe the ethical choices I made, some of which were intentional, others only recognized in hindsight. I provide these accounts because sharing ethical reflections for public scrutiny has been viewed as a key element of ethical, rigorous qualitative research (Bishop & Shepherd, 2011).

As a researcher I had an obligation to respect the rights of the participants (Creswell, 2004). The proposed methods of inquiry, particularly the observations and interviews, disturbed and invaded the day-to-day experiences of participants, and there was always the potential for sensitive information to be discussed. To address the three main ethical issues of consent, confidentiality, and trust, described by Ryen (2004), a number of procedures were put in place, each of which is discussed in chapter 1.

The respective positionalities of myself as the researcher and of the research participants, which were described in chapter 1, raised the ethical issues of how I as a critical scholar would explore the local politics, circumstances, and economics of the particular time and place with a particular set of problems, struggles, and desires (Denzin et al., 2008). As a critical researcher, I recognized that ethical issues may be associated with power relations, not only within the researcher–participant relationship but also at the structural level. I also recognized the need to be accountable to the communities in which and the people with whom I conducted the research. These issues led me to reflect on the following questions during my research project and which I describe in detail below:

1. What research do I want to do?

2. How will the research be done?
3. Who is the research for?

4. Who will benefit from the research?

In answering these questions during my research, it became clear that ethical strategies overlap, build upon each other, and frequently raise as many dilemmas as they address. However, these questions allowed me to make my choices explicit and to draw upon and combine strategies in intentional ways in order to meet my research objectives and political intentions.

3.1 What research do I want to do?

Although my research does not provide a set of best practices for sport-for-development, it is inextricably linked to the issue of how sport-for-development can make the world a more equitable place. This concern for justice was what drew me to the research in the first place. As discussed throughout my dissertation, my research explicitly attends to issues of justice, inclusion, and oppressive ideologies. This explicit focus on these issues is congruent with Sayer (2000) who implores critical researchers to take a normative stance on exposing injustices and suggesting ways forward. That is, “critical researchers should not stop at interpretations aimed at exposing structural relations, but should also be explicit about how things might be made better” (Gibson, 2009, p.174).

By moving beyond description to presenting alternatives that could impact policy makers, I situated myself in a place where I could play a more active role in the fight for equity and justice. This strategy corresponds with Sayer’s (2009) argument that it is necessary to identify “what things are not right as they are, and why” (p. 781). To this effect, in agreeing with Darnell (2012) that critical analysis makes for better policies and programs, this dissertation is committed to offering political and practical utility.

My attempt at answering the question of “what research do I want to do?” also included reflecting on my motivations for conducting research in Zambia. These reflections highlighted that I held both strategic and personal reasons for engaging in the research, as discussed in chapter 1.
3.2 How will the research be done?

Key to answering this question was the development of my understanding of the context in which the study took place and the external (e.g., Zambia Government’s Sixth National Development Plan) and internal (e.g., hiring of sport coaches as staff) structures that influenced this context. The development of my understanding of the Zambian context occurred through many routes. Long before my doctoral studies began, I had an interest in learning about Zambia, particularly the customs and traditions that would become part of my life as a Zambian wife, mother, and member of an extended family. Living in a Zambian-Canadian household and being close to the Zambian-Canadian community has resulted in my increased attention to what is going on in Zambia on a daily basis. For example, part of my morning routine is reading an e-mail chain titled the kabulukutu trust\(^3\) that contains family events and Zambian news. This e-mail begins each morning and travels from Australia, to Zambia, to the UK, and to my computer in Toronto, where I catch up on what is happening in the daily lives of my extended family and listen to what they say is important. My understanding of Zambia has also been strengthened by the several visits I made there before and during my research. These trips offered me the opportunity to spend time talking with friends and family so as to learn more about their understanding of the context and issues. I saw these social interactions as helping to shape my ways of knowing about the contextual nuances and realities in Zambia.

Another strategy I used to become actively engaged and thoughtful regarding ethical tensions that could surface when conducting my research was pursuing deeper knowledge about the community and about myself (Milner, 2007). Part of this strategy involved reflecting on my positionality and that of the participants, as discussed in chapter 1. The strategy also involved learning more about the Zambian context than what I knew from my social interactions. Through reading I sought to gain an understanding on the following questions as introduced by Milner (2007): What is known socially, institutionally, and historically about the community and people under study? What do

\(^3\) Kabulukutu refers to the name of a village in Northern Zambia where the Njelesani family ancestors lived.
people from the indigenous racial and cultural group write about the community and people under study?

Milner’s work brought to the forefront ethical issues that I would not have expected to emerge during the research process given my positionality. For example, before conducting my research, I had decided to compensate participants for their time in a way that was within the boundaries of what the University of Toronto Ethics Board considers ethical. I had expected that requests for monetary donations or information about coming to Canada might arise and was prepared with my responses. What I had not expected was to be held accountable for the concerns that a director had about one of his previous projects and its connection to the University of Toronto. I was unprepared for this question, as I had not considered how the previous history of the organization with the University would influence my own research and possibly limit the opportunity to work with that organization. On the spot I confessed that I was unaware of their dilemma, but assured them that when I next returned I would have more information. In the absence of being immediately able to consult with my formal Zambian advisor at UNZA, I managed this issue by turning to the persons I informally sought guidance from, two Zambian sport-for-development researchers, particularly one who was in Zambia at the time and who was able to provide suggestions of how best to negotiate the issue.

Another strategy I used to address ethical issues was to work with a local research assistant. Initially, I had hoped that two masters’ students from the University of Zambia who have an interest in international interdisciplinary social science research would be identified as research assistants. The students were to be selected based on their linguistic and cultural knowledge (e.g., knowledge of traditional Zambian occupations), qualitative research interests, as well their knowledge of and rapport with NGOs in the city of Lusaka. I had imagined that the skills gained from hands-on field research would be useful to the students as they conducted research for their own theses and that it would contribute to the development of research capacity in Zambia as they moved on to become future scholars and research professionals.
Despite my seeing students’ involvement in this project as ideal, a lack of funding on my end and time to supervise the students on UNZA’s end resulted in the hiring of a local research assistant.\(^4\) The research assistant’s formal roles in the project were to deliver ethics applications, make introductory calls and deliver letters to local organizations, conduct local data collection, and translate the local language used as needed. Informally, he had a much greater role. By drawing on his knowledge and lived experience in Zambia, he also contributed much to my ethical reflexivity through his ability to take into account the specificities of the local context and add an alternative voice. For example, I remember us sitting on a dusty, windy football pitch observing a day’s worth of football matches and him asking me why I took people to lunch before an interview session. I responded that I was hoping to build a rapport with the interviewees by sharing a small meal with them prior to the interview. He pointed out that given the socioeconomic status of the majority of interviewees that same sum of money would be more beneficial in their hands. I quickly adjusted my compensation protocol so that it was more appropriate to the participants and their communities.

Working with the research assistant also helped minimize the power imbalances that existed because of his status as a young black Zambian man living in the same city as the participants. This was most obvious when it came time for me to conduct interviews with male youth. All of the male youth spoke English; however, during the first few minutes of the first interview it was clear that we did not understand one another. Because the research assistant was with me, he was able to take over asking the questions, conducting the interview in English, and encouraging the participant to clearly articulate his ideas. Reflecting on the situation with my Zambian advisors, I found that it might have been because it was one of the first times the youth had held a discussion with a non-Zambian female. This issue became an ethical implication for the future interviews I carried out, as I offered participants the choice to engage in the interview with whom they felt most comfortable. This management of asymmetrical power relations through acknowledging the participants and understanding the ethical reflexivity on how to deal responsibly with

\(^4\) I have encouraged fellow doctoral students from the University of Toronto who are next conducting their research in Zambia to consider the idea of working with UNZA master’s students, given the identified benefits to both.
them is seen as essential in the field of qualitative research (Fontana & Frey, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Edwards and Mauthner (2002) noted, “rather than ignoring or blurring power positions, ethical practice needs to pay attention to them” (p. 27).

Acknowledging the strengths the research assistant brought to the research given his positionality also necessitates an exploration of the limitations. I’m drawn to Hodkinson’s (2005) claim that “the role of insider researcher may offer significant potential benefits but that caution, awareness and ongoing reflexivity is a pre-requisite” (p. 132). During the interviews, the local researcher tended to ask leading questions based on his ideological assumptions (e.g., “What really made these netball girls change, to stop the evil things that they were doing and become good girls?”). To address this issue, I talked with the research assistant about how the interviewer and the questions influence data generation and then made a revised list of follow-up questions and prompts that were a better fit for him as an interviewer in the study.

3.3 Who is the research for?

Throughout my study I used ethical reflexivity as an opportunity to determine how I was interpreting and representing people and communities in ways that honour those communities and maintain their integrity. This did not mean that I avoided contentious or controversial topics, but rather that I hoped to bring to the forefront what people were already thinking. As a critical researcher, it was key to me that my research was conducted in such a way that it contributed actively to a more just society. This issue arose during the analysis and writing of my work. For example, I struggled with how to present the findings so that they would not unintentionally lead donors to interpreting the results as reflecting negatively on the programs. I addressed this issue in several ways. Initially, when conducting my analysis of the inclusion of youth in programming, I focused on ideologies being re/produced at the macro-level in order to present findings that do not ascribe fault or blame at the level of the individual staff or youth. Furthermore, in order to produce work that I would be comfortable for the participants and donors to read, and that was respectful and fair to both, I initially planned to have my UNZA advisor comment on how he perceived the participants and organizations to be
represented in my work. However, due to logistical challenges this became unfeasible. I then had one of my informal Zambian advisors read all of the work before I submitted it for publication or dissemination. This strategy was also adopted to help address the risk of reproducing any oppressive patterns on my part.

3.4 Who will benefit from the research?

In my research I recognize the uneven balance of burdens and benefits. I realize that I received greater benefits than the participants. It is me who is named in publications while those researched are anonymous. I had control and authority over the academic discourse produced and I set the research problem, the questions to be answered, and decided whose voices were heard or not. Burdens I experienced included how to access and address power issues with participants who considered themselves to be elite subjects (i.e., prominent and influential people) (Welch et al., 2002). This issue arose when I had scheduled interviews with program directors and found myself spending much time waiting outside their offices until they became available or having them depart just before we were to meet as other activities had become a greater priority for them.

The participants had burdens in terms of the time the study took away from them and possibly the unintended harms of donors interpreting the results as reflecting negatively on the programs as discussed above. However, benefits did exist for the participants as well. As identified by Hutchinson, Wilson, and Wilson (1994), benefits from taking part in the interviews can contribute to the participants’ self-acknowledgement through their having an opportunity to be heard when they describe their opinions. Another benefit cited by Hutchinson et al. that is relevant to this study and that may have occurred is an increased sense of purpose through knowing that the information will be used as a basis for recommendations for future programs.

To ensure that the benefit-to-burden ratio was always on the side of benefit I employed several strategies. First, in addition to going through the ethics review boards at the University of Toronto and the University of Lusaka, I drew on my advisors, who helped to address the risk of increasing any burden to participants. Second, I sought to
demonstrate respect for people when I was among them by being slow to speak and eager to learn, not flaunt my knowledge, not trample on people’s dignity in the course of research, be cautious, and be generous – all characteristics a researcher working in a cross-cultural context strives for (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Despite these characteristics, I also recognized that respect and care were not enough. As a critical researcher, it was key to me that my research was conducted in such a way that it contributed actively to a more just society. I did not seek to discredit or derail sport-for-development, but rather to shine a light on its benefits and raise questions of how sport-for-development practice, policy, and research could enhance occupational justice.

Another strategy that I will employ upon the completion of my research is to make available a written summary of the policy and practice implications derived from the study and provide a copy of the summary to each organization that participated in the research. This information will be provided to each of the organizations on the understanding that they will independently and for their own purposes choose to use the knowledge as they see fit. The purpose of such a strategy is to give back both ownership of knowledge and material benefit to those who participated in the research.

4 Implications of the study

A common objective central to all of the five organizations I studied was to target the youth seen as the most marginalized and vulnerable within their communities. A number of suggestions are thus made regarding future work with youth in sport-for-development programs in Lusaka, Zambia, across policy, practice, and research. The suggestions are intended to be a starting point for local experts in policy and practice, who then can move forward with deciding how the particular changes that are relevant could be implemented. The suggestions can potentially be further specified for use elsewhere in the sub-Saharan region and low-income countries. They also have possible applications to impoverished communities of Canada where youths’ occupations are being used by NGOs as a vehicle for broad, sustainable social development.
4.1 Implications for policy and practice

For the purpose of this dissertation, I chose to address policy and practice together as two intertwining fields because practice is shaped by the pattern of resource distribution in the policy arena.

This study identified how the sport-for-development agenda in Zambia is influenced by dominant ideologies and hampered by broader systemic issues, such as endemic poverty. I recognize that these injustices do not rest on the sport-for-development programs, yet by the same token, the programs could consider adapting their programming in order to enhance occupational justice for youth. Possibilities could be designing a program that is balanced between providing sport development in hopes of creating athletic careers, while at the same time having other programs for youth for whom this is not a goal.

The findings of this study support the idea that occupational injustice must be, at least in part, addressed through policies and strategies that enable inclusion (Whiteford & Townsend, 2011). At the policy level, the findings of this study have implications for policy makers in their decisions regarding the mainstreaming of programs for marginalized and vulnerable youth by organizations. Even as I put forward the idea of inclusion, I also acknowledge that with inclusion comes the potential for new forms of exclusion, despite inclusive intentions. There are only limited resources, so there may be less time for individual sport training as a coach works with a larger group. However, because the programs normally operate under a peer model, these ideas could be a new opportunity to extend the range of skills that peers have.

It appears that currently there may be few opportunities for staff to talk about inclusion in their own practice settings, and thus staff may remain unaware of the concerns of the youth they work with. One suggestion might be more dialogue that asks questions that have largely gone unasked to date. Questions could include, “What can sport-for-development do to make the world a more just and equitable place?” This dialogue could occur through public engagement frameworks, wherein members of the public are involved in the agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy-forming activities of
organizations (Rowe & Frewer, 2005). Such dialogue may help program staff to better recognize the occupational needs of program youth. Furthermore, dialogue with colleagues may also be useful, as it may be easier to consider new ideas and work through how they can be applied to the realities of practice with others. Finally, it would seem that an increase in dialogue between researchers and practitioners needs to occur. A purely academic emphasis will likely fail to attend to practice realities, and in doing so is not likely to lead to uptake in practice. On the practitioners side the lack of dialogue may lead to the adherence of established practices and the failure to benefit from the advances in knowledge and understandings produced by those in academia (Molke & Laliberte Rudman, 2009).

Finally, the findings of this study hold implications for other organizations beyond sport-for-development organizations, which play a role in enhancing inclusion for youth. Particularly needed are programs that work with youth who do not participate in sport-for-development and that could help them become socially included in a way that fits their resources and occupational interests. This involves identifying stakeholders who should be included in the network and who have yet to be approached. One idea is to have greater involvement of schools because many youth are already connected to these institutions.

4.2 Implications for future studies

The findings of this study point to a number of areas that warrant further attention and research. First, it has been suggested that the study of occupation itself necessitates interdisciplinary collaboration (Clark, 2006; Molke et al., 2004). Given that sport-for-development initiatives are based on occupations, I would argue that sport-for-development has much to gain from collaborations between sport sociologists and occupation scientists. Much of the literature cited in this dissertation on the use of sport occupations was not written from a critical occupational approach, yet the materials have offered pertinent insights into how sport occupations are used in development programming. This knowledge from sport-for-development and sport sociology
researchers could be better used in the future by the partnering of occupational and sport scientists.

A critical occupational approach also offered pertinent insights into sport occupations to the fields of sport-for-development and sport sociology by revealing novel understandings that to date have not been raised in the literature. In order for sport sociologists to draw on the tenants of a critical occupational approach to understanding sport, future research must be conducted. This dissertation has shown how a critical occupational approach can be implemented; further research using this approach is needed to provide researchers with greater practical examples of the approach.

This study sought to elicit the perspective of program staff and those youth currently participating in the program. As stated previously, the findings suggested that future research could consider the perspectives of other individuals to gain important insights into dominant ideologies and how they influence inclusion for youth. Based on the findings and the lack of the inclusion of their voices in the literature, the stakeholders that might be useful to include in future sport-for-development research are as follows:

1. Youths who do not attend programs, in order to seek an understanding about their lack of participation and the ideologies contributing to this lack of participation.

2. Boys and girls living with disabilities who are currently participating in the programs, to gain an understanding of their perception of the occupations used and how these and the dominant ideologies influence their participation. Of all of the youth, boys and girls with disabilities have been the most often silenced, misinterpreted, misrepresented, and placed on the margins. Limited literature exists that considers their participation in sport-for-development.

3. Parents whose beliefs were identified to be a key influence in their children’s participation. Such research would require engagement within the local communities.

This dissertation draws attention to the concept of occupational justice for those youth who are considered to be the most marginalized and vulnerable in Zambia. This finding suggests that a broader exploration that goes beyond the sport-for-development context is
needed in order to determine whether occupational justice is enabled in other contexts (e.g., education, health).

Future research might also examine policies at the level of institutions and governments to determine the existing ideologies that influence the form, function, and meaning of occupations taken up and who gets to participate. Such research must ask such questions as “How does the Government of Zambia’s recognition and inclusion of sport in its Sixth National Development Plan (SNPD), but exclusion of other occupations, influence the prioritization of sports in development programs that strive to align themselves with the SNPD (as that is seen as good development practice)?”

Having considered the key implications of the study’s findings for policy, practice, and research, I now consider the limitations of the research.

5 Limitations

First, I recognize that in choosing a critical occupational approach as the methodological framework I have limited my analytical lens to a critically orientated epistemology, which yields a particular kind of understanding and limits my understanding of the participants’ experiences in other ways (e.g., traditional phenomenology). I have addressed this challenge by explicitly detailing my critical occupational approach and related assumptions throughout this dissertation so that others may think of how their own theoretical lens might offer another understanding of the data. This practice may raise epistemological conversations about diverse theoretical positions and the approaches to knowledge generation they evoke, thereby enriching the study of occupation and contributing to a foundation for future scholarship (Kinsella, 2012, p. 78).

Second, although I intended this study to be inclusive of persons with disabilities, I was only able to recruit one staff member who identified as having a disability and did not successfully recruit any disabled youth of either gender. My recruitment strategies, therefore, may not have been effective in reaching boys and girls with disabilities. There is a stigma attached to having a disability in Zambian society, and the directors of the organizations who provided the list of names of potential participants did not include any
boy or girl with a disability. The directors may have felt that boys and girls with disabilities had no valuable information to offer or believed these youth were vulnerable and wanted to protect them from a stranger and outsider like myself.

6 Concluding remarks

This study explored the role occupation plays in sport-for-development programming and the implications for this programming using a critical occupational approach. More specifically, the research investigated how staff and youth participants spoke about and understood the use of sport occupations in sport-for-development programs and how sport-for-development ideologies and practices in Lusaka, Zambia, influenced the participation of youth.

The findings provide an essential and unique contribution for the study of occupation and sport-for-development methodologically, theoretically, and practically. The key findings and implications are as follows:

1. Sport is seen as a way to economic prosperity through achieving a career in sports, most especially through becoming a professional football player abroad. This implicit aim leads to a heavy focus on sport development programming over inclusive programming. The identified ideologies within the Zambian sport-for-development context contributed to this focus on sport development and thereby re/produced occupational injustice for some.

2. A critical occupational approach is an appropriate methodology for studying ideologies underlying human activity, how knowledge re/production is controlled, the mechanisms by which occupations are taken up, and who stands to gain or lose. Particularly, this approach brought attention to how ideologies intersected to mediate youths’ participation in sport-for-development programming.

3. From a practice and policy standpoint, this research suggests the design of sport-for-development programming that continues to support the participation of youth
with the potential for an athletic career but also supports inclusion of youth of differing abilities, economic means, and genders.

The challenge lies in the translation of these understandings into practices that promote inclusion for all youth. Along with sport-for-development staff, policy makers, youth, and other stakeholders, I too hope to be a part of this achievement.
References


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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter for Program Staff

(To be printed on letterhead from the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto)

Research Project Title: Examining Sport-for-Development using the Critical Occupational Approach to Research

Researcher: Janet Njelesani
PhD Candidate
Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada

Dear Participant

My name is Janet Njelesani and I am currently completing my Doctoral studies in Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto, Canada. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study to explore the use of activities in international development programs as part of my thesis research. My proposed study, Occupation-for-development: Incorporating occupation into the international development agenda, seeks to investigate how international development programs are using varied occupations/activities in Zambia to contribute to the realization of international development goals.

In order to find out about the use of activities in development programming, I would like to invite you to participate in a one-to-one interview. You will be one of 6-8 program officers from Lusaka interviewed as part of this study. If you decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to share your experience and perspectives on the program activities you use.

The interview will be held at a time and place that is convenient for you and will take approximately 60 minutes. I will provide you a meal prior to conducting the interview, should this be convenient for you.

With your permission, the interview will be digitally (audio) recorded as to not miss any information. Please be assured that the information you provide will be held in strictest confidence at all times. Only myself, the research assistant, the person doing transcribing, and my research supervisors, will have access to the raw data collected from the interviews. Based upon the recording I will make a typed transcript that I will save on my password protected encrypted laptop. All devices and consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet both during my stay in Zambia, as well as at a locked cabinet in Dr. Polatajko’s (thesis co-supervisor) lab at the University of Toronto when I return to Canada. After seven years I will destroy of all the information by deleting all information saved on the computer. Please be assured that your identity will remain anonymous through the use of a pseudonym and the elimination of any identifiable information.
If you agree, in addition to the interview, I would like to observe one or two program activities that you lead. These observations can occur on your regularly scheduled day for leading program activities. I appreciate your demanding schedule and if appropriate, we can schedule the interview and observation on consecutive days. You can choose to only participate in the interview with no consequences or penalties. Similar to the interview, no identifiable information will be used in observations.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your participation or lack thereof will not influence your affiliation with your organization at all. You may choose to withdraw at any time without negative consequences, and you have the right not to answer any question or any parts of the interview/observations process.

This study has no known risks that may affect you, the participant. You may not receive any direct personal benefit from participating in this study, but the information you share will help suggest new ways forward on how to use activities in future international development programs.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant, you can contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto by email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or via telephone at 00-1-416-946-3273. You can also contact the Research Ethics Office at the University of Zambia at: 260-211-290258.

I appreciate you considering my invitation to participate in this study. Should you have any questions or concerns, I would be pleased to answer your questions. If you agree to participate, please contact me directly by e-mail or phone and we can arrange for a convenient time to meet.

Sincerely,

Janet Njelesani,
PhD Candidate
Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada
0975 – 495 – 790
janet.njelesani@utoronto.ca
Appendix B: Informed Letter of Consent for Program Staff

(To be printed on letterhead from the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto)

**Research Project Title:** Examining Sport-for-Development using the Critical Occupational Approach to Research

**Researcher:** Janet Njelesani  
PhD Candidate  
Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science  
University of Toronto  
Toronto, Canada

I understand that this interview and observation is part of a Doctoral student research study which will examine my perspectives on the use of activities in international development programs and is being conducted by Janet Njelesani from the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto, Canada.

I have read the accompanying recruitment letter and I understand that I am being asked to participate in an interview that will be held at a time and place that is convenient for me and will take approximately 60 minutes. I also understand that I will be provided a meal prior to conducting the interview, should I choose to accept. I also understand that I am being asked to be observed as I lead one or two program activities.

I understand that with my consent, the interview will be digitally (audio) recorded and later transcribed and that notes will be taken during the observation. I am aware that I do not have to answer any questions that I do not feel comfortable answering and that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and I may choose to withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

I am aware that the information provided will be held in strictest confidence at all times and that only the principal investigator, the research assistant, the person doing the transcribing, and her research supervisors, will have access to the raw data collected from the interviews. The answers I provide will be saved on a laptop and that is encrypted and protected by a password and all consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet. After seven years the data will be destroyed. I understand that my identity will remain anonymous through the use of a pseudonym and the elimination of any identifiable information.

Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. Any risks or benefits that may arise out of my participation have also been explained to my satisfaction.
I hereby consent to participate in the interview.

Signature  Date

Print Name

I hereby consent to being recorded to audiotape.

Signature  Date

Print Name

I hereby consent to being observed leading program activities.

Signature  Date

Print Name

Researcher Signature  Date
Appendix C: Recruitment Telephone Script for Program Youth

Dear Participant

Hello, my name is Janet Njelesani, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Toronto, Canada. I am calling you today to invite you to participate in my study as you are currently participating in an international development program in Lusaka and my study will explore the use of activities in international development programs. The study results will be used to suggest new ways of how international development organizations can use activities in their programming.

In order to find out about the use of activities in development programming, I would like to invite you to participate in a one-to-one interview. You will be one of 12 to 20 program participants from Lusaka interviewed. If you decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to share your experience and perspectives on the program activities you are involved.

The interview will be held at a time and place that is convenient for you and will take approximately 60 minutes. I will provide you a meal prior to the interview.

With your permission, the interview will be digitally (audio) recorded. The information you provide will be held in strictest confidence at all times. Your identity will remain anonymous through the use of a pseudonym (alias) and the elimination of any identifiable information.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. Your participation or lack thereof will not influence your affiliation with the organization at all. You also have the right not to answer any question or any parts of the interview.

This study has no known risks that may affect you, the participant. You may not receive any direct personal benefit from participating in this study, but the information you share will help develop an understanding of how the use of activities could improve future international development programs.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant, you can contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto by email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or via telephone at 00-1-416-946-3273. You can also contact the Research Ethics Office at the University of Zambia at: 260-211-290258.

Do you have any questions or concerns? Would you like to participate? Shall we arrange for a convenient time to meet? My contact number is 0975 – 495 – 790.

Thank you for your time today.
Appendix D: Informed Letter of Consent for Program Youth

(To be printed on letterhead from the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto)

**Research Project Title:** Examining Sport-for-Development using the Critical Occupational Approach to Research

**Researcher:** Janet Njelesani  
PhD Candidate  
Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science  
University of Toronto  
Toronto, Canada

I understand that this interview is part of a Doctoral student research study which will examine my views on the use of activities in international development programs and is being conducted by Janet Njelesani from the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto, Canada.

I understand that I am being asked to participate in an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes. I also understand that I will be provided a meal before the interview.

I understand that with my permission, the interview will be recorded and later typed out. I am aware that I do not have to answer any questions that I do not feel comfortable answering and that my involvement in this study is completely voluntary and I may choose to withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

I am aware that the information provided will be protected at all times and that only Janet Njelesani, Janet’s research assistant, the person typing out the interviews, and Janet’s supervisors, will have access to my interview. The answers I provide will be saved on a laptop that is encrypted and password protected and my consent form will be stored in a locked cupboard. After seven years the information will be destroyed. I understand that I will not be identified, that an alias will be used and any identifying information will be deleted.

Any questions I have asked have been answered. Any risks or benefits of the study have also been explained.

I hereby consent to participate in this study.

__________________________________  ____________________
Signature                          Date

__________________________________
Print Name
I hereby consent to being recorded to audiotape.

________________________________
Signature

________________________________
Date

______________________________
Print Name

______________________________
Researcher Signature

______________________________
Date
Appendix E: Request for Authorization

(To be printed on letterhead from the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto)

**Research Project Title:** Examining Sport-for-Development using the Critical Occupational Approach to Research

**Researcher:** Janet Njelesani  
PhD Candidate  
Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science  
University of Toronto  
Toronto, Canada

Dear Sir/Madam:

**Re: Request for authorization to undertake research study**

My name is Janet Njelesani and I am currently completing my Doctoral studies in Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Toronto. I am writing to request authorization to undertake a research study at your organization as part of my thesis research.

My proposed study, Occupation-for-development: Incorporating occupation into the international development agenda, seeks to investigate how international development programs are using varied occupations/activities in Zambia to contribute to the realization of international development goals. Drawing on the research I am conducting, I will develop a model of occupation-for-development which will suggest new ways forward on how to use activities within the international development context.

As part of the data collection for this study, I would like to conduct interviews and observations between 10th June and 2nd September 2011 with program officers and participants from your organization. To this end, I am requesting authorization to enter your organization site to conduct interviews and observe staff and participants.

I remain mindful of the day-to-day challenges and great effort involved with the delivery of services in Zambia by your organization. To this end I welcome any suggestions that either you or your staff may have for me that may limit any potential disruption to their work.

This study has no known risks for participants from your organization. Participants will not receive any direct personal benefit from participating in this study, but the information they share will suggest new ways forward on how to use activities within the international development context.
Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the rights of participants from your organization, you can contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto by email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or via telephone at 00-1-416-946-3273. You can also contact the Research Ethics Office at the University of Zambia at: 260-211-290258.

Should you require further information or clarification, kindly let me know. If you think your organization would be agreeable to participating, please contact me directly by e-mail or phone and we can arrange for a convenient time to meet.

I look forward to your favorable consideration to this request.

Sincerely,

Janet Njelesani,
PhD Candidate
Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada
0975 – 495 – 790
janet.njelesani@utoronto.ca
Appendix F: Informed Letter of Consent for Program Directors

(To be printed on letterhead from the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto)

**Research Project Title:** Examining Sport-for-Development using the Critical Occupational Approach to Research

**Researcher:** Janet Njelesani  
PhD Candidate  
Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science  
University of Toronto  
Toronto, Canada

I understand that Janet Njelesani from the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Toronto, Canada will be conducting interviews and observations at this organization as part of her Doctoral student research study, which will examine the use of activities in international development programs.

I understand that the identity of this organization will remain anonymous through the use of a pseudonym and the elimination of any identifiable information and that the organization’s participation in this study is completely voluntary and we may choose to withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

I am aware that the information obtained will be held in strictest confidence at all times and that only the principal investigator, the research assistant, the person doing the transcriptions, and her research supervisors, will have access to the raw data. The data will be saved on a laptop and that is encrypted and protected by a password and all consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet. After seven years the data will be destroyed.

Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. Any risks or benefits that may arise out of the organization’s participation have also been explained to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent for (name of organization)____________________ to participate in this study.

_________________________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature                                          Date

_________________________________________________________
Print Name

_________________________________________________________
Researcher Signature  Date
Appendix G: Interview Guide for Program Staff

Introduction to interview:

Thank you so much for meeting with me today. I hope you will think of this interview as an opportunity for you to share your experiences in the hopes of allowing program planners to understand project officers’ views of the use of sporting activities in programs, in order to effectively tailor possible services for the future.

General background

Before I begin, I would like to get some general information about you. I just want to remind you that this information will remain confidential and you don’t have to answer any questions you don’t want to answer.

About Organization

- What is the name of your organization?
- What is the mission of the organization?
- How long have you been employed in this organization?
- Can you tell me about a typical day/session for you in the organization?

About Program Occupations (Relates to the rationale for the particular occupational choices by the organizations and considers which occupations are executed and a priority for the organization).

- How do you choose which activities to use in the programming?
- Are there particular activities that your organization always uses or favors/prefers to use in programming?
- Which activities do you enjoy planning/leading most?
- Which activities do you enjoy planning/leading least?
- Are there any activities you avoid using in programming?
- What program activities help and/or hinder the organization to achieve its mission?
- Are there guiding principles that influence the choice of activities to be used?
- What knowledge or skills related to the program activities do you have?
• What type of training did you take to prepare you for this position?
• Have you built new skills or knowledge about the use of activities in your development work?
• How could other types of activities be integrated into programming?
• What resources are available for programming activities?
• What funding is available to use for providing program activities?
• If the organization had more resources, what would it do more or differently in terms of program activities?

**Value/Risks/Benefits of Occupations** (Relates to the perspectives on the value, benefits and risks of using the particular occupations in their context and considers whether occupations are acceptable, appropriate, and responsive to stakeholder expectations.)

• Who are the primary recipients of the organization services?
• Who do you see as being a stakeholder in your program activities?
• How are the program activities impacted by the opinions of the service recipients?
• Have your stakeholders voiced any requests for changes in your program activities?
• What are the local customs and traditions that influence the choice of program activities?
• How do you understand your programs activities contribute to achieving development outcomes/goals?
• To what extent do social categories (age, race, class, gender, sexuality, ability) enable or prevent you from carrying out program activities?
• Have you experienced any resistance from participants or community members to any program activity initiatives?

**Closing the dialogue**

I would like to thank you again for your time. I would like to just wrap up this interview with a few more general questions.
• Are there any other important points about your experiences that we haven’t yet discussed?

Probes:
• Can you elaborate on that idea?
• Would you explain that further?
• I’m not sure I understand what you’re saying.
• Is there anything else?
• Would you give me an example?
• Can you tell me a bit more about the last time you experienced that or felt that way?
• Can you give me a specific example of that?
• Do you personally feel that way?
• Is that something you have experienced?
• Can you tell me more?
• Can you expand on your answer?
Appendix H: Interview Guide for Program Youth

Introduction to interview:

Thank you so much for meeting with me today. I hope you will think of this interview as an opportunity for you to share your experiences in the hopes of allowing program planners to understand participants’ views of the use of activities in programs, in order to effectively tailor possible services for the future.

Before I begin, I would like to remind you that this information will remain confidential and you don’t have to answer any questions you don’t want to answer.

• What is the name of the organization you attend?

• What is the focus of the organization?

• How long have you been participating in this organization’s program activities?

• Can you tell me about a typical day/week for you in the program?

• Which activities do you enjoy doing most in the program?

• How do you feel when you are in those programs you enjoy?

• Which activities do you enjoy doing least in the program?

• How do you feel when you are in those programs you least enjoy?

• Are there any activities you avoid doing in the program?

• Did any program activities draw you to the program? If so, which ones?

• How do you choose which activities to participate in?

• Are there particular activities that the organization always uses or favors/prefers to use in programming?

• Do you have any opportunities to provide feedback on the type of activities to be used in programming?

• If you could suggest changes to improve the program activities, what would you recommend?

• What types of activities do you engage in outside of the program?
  o Would you like for any of these activities to be used within the program?
Closing the dialogue

I would like to thank you again for your time. I would like to just wrap up this interview with a few more general questions.

Are there any other important points about your experiences that we haven’t yet discussed?

Probes:
  • Can you elaborate on that idea?
  • Would you explain that further?
  • I’m not sure I understand what you’re saying.
  • Is there anything else?
  • Would you give me an example?
  • Can you tell me a bit more about the last time you experienced that or felt that way?
  • Can you give me a specific example of that?
  • Do you personally feel that way?
  • Is that something you have experienced?
  • Can you tell me more?
  • Can you expand on your answer?
Appendix I: Program Observation Protocol

Case Study:
Date:
Time Observation Began:
Time Ended:

- Describe the program setting (color, size, shape, number of desks/tables, number of windows, furniture or equipment in the space room, temperature, noise level)

- Describe how the session begins (who is present, what exactly is said to initiate)

- Describe the chronology of events in regular intervals (e.g., every 15 minutes for an hour-long session)

- Describe the activities that take place during the observation.
  - Who is participating in the activity?
  - How do they participate? Describe examples.
  - Are there any changes in patterns during the observations?

- Describe how decisions are made during the observation period.
  - Who makes decisions on program activities?
  - How are decisions communicated? (e.g., written, verbal).
  - Document examples of program activity decisions that are made during the observation.

- Describe nonverbal communication (How do participants get attention? How much do they fidget, move around? How do participants: dress, express affection, physically place themselves in the setting?)

- Describe participant behaviors.

- How did participants respond or react to what was happening in the program during the observation?

- Roughly what proportion (some, most, all) are actively engaged?
• How does the program end? (What are the signals that the activity is ending? Who is present, what is said, how do participants react, how is the completion of this activity related to other activities?)