



*Marrying Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS)
and occupation: a critical epistemic
contribution to occupational therapy*

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Introduction



- Critical to thinking about being ‘positioning for impact’ is ‘rethinking the knowledge issue’.
- How do we bring other thinkers?
- How do we advocate for epistemologies and methodologies that centre Africa?

- Colonial encounters – culminated into divisions and distinctions leaving the ‘othered indigenous groups’ struggling to gain their own ontological density

(Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Smith 2012; Grosfoguel 2011; Semali & Kincheloe 1999)



What has this colonial/modern world order done to the colonised subjects?



- Persisting quadruple burden of disease (SAHR 2017)
- Indigenous people bear disproportionate burden of poverty, chronic diseases, disability and mortality (Lancet review). (Anderson et al. 2016; Mitrou et al. 2014; Snodgras 2015; King, Smith & Gracey 2009; (Ohenjo et al. 2006).
- Loss of land - increased alcohol consumption rates amongst indigenous communities – increased violence (Ohenjo et al. 2006; Cloete & Ramugondo 2015)
- Prejudices, negative stereotypes, derogatory attitudes and paternalistic approaches – a colonial feature (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights 2005)
- Colonisation as a fundamental ill-health determinant – negatively impacts well-being of indigenous groups (King, Smith & Gracey 2009; Durie 2004, 2005)



What is this taken for granted knowledge?



- Who are the indigenous people? (Semali & Kincheloe 1999; Smith 1999)
- What is indigenous knowledge? (Aikenhead 1996; Vhurumuku & Mokeleche 2009; Semali & Kincheloe 1999)
- What is Indigenous knowledge systems?
- Does not seek universality – a distinguishing characteristic

Characteristics of this knowledge:

- **It is local**
- **It is holistic**
- **It is agrapha** (Semali and Kincheloe 1999)



Why does this knowledge matter in OT?



- Indigenous knowledge shapes the identity of indigenous people
- Identity guides the everyday doings to navigate life and sustain livelihoods
- Participation and occupations are key constructs in the production and translation on this knowledge and maintaining the inseparable link between all creation.
- Any disintegration of such a system invited ill-health and social ills in many indigenous communities.



What can it offer the profession and the discipline?



- Relevance
- Excellence (Nyerere 1967)

These two principles are important as we reimagine how it is to be 'positioned for impact'

- Occupational consciousness
- Critical Reflexivity



What content would such a reimagining entail?



- Smith (1999) - a Maori researcher proposes some key indigenous projects
 1. Claiming and reclaiming
 2. Story telling
 3. Indigenising
 4. Intervening
 5. Connection
 6. Reading
 7. Representing
 8. Reframing
 9. Restoring
 10. Protecting
 11. Creating



Any comments/Questions



Ndiyabulela ngoku mamela kwenu
Thank You for listening