

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

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Owing to coloniality, research about African people is produced, often without African people's perspectives. Theory is often credited to the North while subjects studied include those located in the South. This privileges Eurocentric and western thinkers as central to knowledge production (Grosfoguel 2011).

Using the case study of Elliotdale in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, I demonstrate local people's dissatisfaction with the epistemic consequences of dominant colonial knowledge produced with forces that continue to methodically degrade and silence indigenous people's own epistemological and ontological foundations. The devastating consequences are evident in a plethora of social and economic injustices amongst indigenous communities, which influence agency in accessing health and well-being. Health practitioners often accept ideologies of the dominant culture while users of these services are left disempowered and disintegrated as occupational beings.

This case study brings to bear the relevance of Indigenous Knowledge Systems as an alternative epistemology for occupational therapists and occupational scientists in the South to generate practical knowledges that will enable humanising and healing in oppressed societies. The contribution of IKS has the potential to give people in the South a voice following the call for southern theorising about human occupations (Ramugondo 2015). It will also be an opportunity for IKS to contribute to the development of the profession, not only because of its potential to restore health, well-being and dignity to indigenous people but also in assisting with advancing ongoing resistance against oppressive factors that have been defining indigenous peoples' existence as incapable of self-determination.