

2017

## Rethinking Indigenous Knowledge in (African) Tourism Studies

Aaron Yankholmes

Bournemouth University, [ayankholmes@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:ayankholmes@bournemouth.ac.uk)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.tru.ca/cts-proceedings>



Part of the [Tourism and Travel Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Yankholmes, Aaron (2017) "Rethinking Indigenous Knowledge in (African) Tourism Studies," *Critical Tourism Studies Proceedings*: Vol. 2017 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.tru.ca/cts-proceedings/vol2017/iss1/9>

This Abstract is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ TRU Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in Critical Tourism Studies Proceedings by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ TRU Library. For more information, please contact [apaterson@tru.ca](mailto:apaterson@tru.ca).

**Title:** Rethinking Indigenous Knowledge in (African) Tourism Studies

**Author:** Aaron Yankholmes

**Affiliation:** Bournemouth University

**Contact:** ayankholmes@bournemouth.ac.uk

**Session Type:** Presentation

**Abstract:**

Several African scholars and Africanists (e.g., Fanon, 1963, 1967; Asante, 2003; Nyamnyoh, 2012; Dei, 2002, 2012) advocate a radical change in the conventional processes of knowledge production, which have historically deprived and marginalized African voices. The main thrust of their argument is that Indigenous knowledge (IK) offers the epistemic framework that African scholars and knowledge producers can employ to articulate, create, and produce knowledge that challenges and extends ‘western’ experiences on the continent.

However, although IK has noteworthy merits, it is far less easy to disentangle. This situation is further complicated by the fact that applying the principles of IK commits African scholars to the longstanding dichotomy between Indigenous and ‘western’ knowledge (Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Geertz, 1983). This paper critically examines the possibilities for incorporating IK into tourism development, in general, and scholarship on African tourism, in particular, and its attendant implication for hopeful imaginaries and practices espoused by theorists of critical tourism studies.

The key explanations identified for why there is limited utility of IK in tourism studies are the inadequate number of interlocutors or pioneers in the field and limited published literature on IK. The conclusion can also be drawn that African-based scholars are ideally situated to thinking past ‘western’ tourism research traditions and producing different insights. However, the limited number of studies espousing IK implies that (African) tourism studies is not always radically different because such research has been filtered through ‘western’ epistemology and methodology. Following an in-depth multi-dimensional analysis of preliminary research results from Ghana, some recommendations for thinking about and doing (African) tourism will also be presented.

**References:**

- Asante. M.K. (2003). *Afrocentricity: The theory of social change*. Chicago: African American Images.
- Dei, G. (2002). Rethinking the role of Indigenous Knowledges in the Academy. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 4(2), 111–132.
- Dei, G. (2012). Indigenous anti-colonial knowledge as ‘heritage knowledge’ for promoting Black/African education in diasporic contexts. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society*, 1(1), 102–119.
- Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black Skin, white masks*. New York: Grove Press.
- Geertz, C. (1983). *Local knowledge: Further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York: Basic.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nyamnjoh, F. (2012). Potted plants in greenhouses: A critical reflection on the resilience of colonial education in Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 1–26.