



UNIVERSITÄT  
BAYREUTH



Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies



# **BIGSAS SEMINAR**

**Prof. Dr. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni**

Chair in Epistemologies of the Global South,  
University of Bayreuth

**Epistemologies of the Global South:  
Contributions to Reconfiguration of  
African Studies**

Mon, 16 November 2020 -

Mon, 15 February 2021

10 - 12 am via ZOOM



## **Description**

Epistemologies of the Global South embody knowledges that have been silenced and displaced as a result of the unfolding of Euromodernity, empire and colonialism. These resilient epistemologies of the Global South confront the problem of cognitive injustice, that is, the practice of non-recognition of diverse ways through which diverse people make sense of the world and themselves. Therefore, epistemologies of the Global South are directly linked to struggles for re-existence of those people who were subjected to colonialism/coloniality. These epistemologies of the Global South are resurgent today in the context of exhaustion of what has come to be known as 'Northern epistemologies'. These seminar series and discussions draw insights from epistemologies of the Global South and test their applicability to reconfiguring African Studies. The preferred mode of this seminar is discussion-based to enable co-production of knowledge as well as a participatory and reflexive environment, where participants present their own take and critiques.

## **The seminars are envisaged to cover the following:**

16.11.2020	The Cognitive Empire and Colonization of the Mind
23.11.2020	The Politics of knowledge and African Intellectuals
30.11.2020	African Intellectual and Ideological Productions.
07.12.2020	The Africanization and Decolonization of the University in Africa
14.12.2020	The Crisis in African Higher Education and Neoliberal Coloniality of Markets
11.01.2020	,Turns' in African Knowledge Production
18.01.2020	The Global Political Economy of Knowledge
25.01.2020	Engendering Knowledge and Scholarship on Africa
01.02.2020	The Rhodes Must Fall Movements
08.02.2020	The Black Lives Matter Movements and Planetary Decolonization of the 21st Century
15.02.2020	The Current Conjuncture: Resurgent and Insurgent Decolonization.

All Junior Fellows are welcome to participate in this seminar via ZOOM. The number of participants is limited to 20 students. Please enrol until November 15 on elearning (course 50745).



## Epistemologies of the Global South: Contributions to Reconfiguration of African Studies

Prof. Dr. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni  
Chair in Epistemologies of the Global South

### Detailed description

#### 1. The Cognitive Empire and Colonization of the Mind

**Date:** 16/11/2020

**Time:** 10-12 am

**Description:** *The cognitive empire operates through invasion of the mental universe of its targets. This invasion is called epistemological colonization mainly because it targets the mind. This seminar posits that knowledge creates reality (epistemology frames ontology). Hence the empire was always underpinned by coloniality of knowledge. Such institutions as school, church and university played a central role in the unfolding of the cognitive empire. In this seminar we discuss the technologies used by the cognitive empire to inscribe colonization of the mind. The starting point being coloniality of being through social classification and racial hierarchization of human population on accordance with invented differential ontological densities. The seminar also discusses the long-term impact of colonization of the mind as well as the ways of decolonizing the mind.*

**Reading:**

- Boaventura de Sousa Santos. 2007. 'Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges.' *Review*, XXX(1), pp. 45-89.
- Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni. 2020. 'The Cognitive Empire, Politics of Knowledge and African Intellectual Productions: Reflections on Struggles for Epistemic Freedom and Resurgence of Decolonization in the Twenty-First Century.' *Third World Quarterly*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.17775487>.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1986. *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Oxford: James Currey.

#### 2. The Politics of knowledge and African Intellectuals

**Date:** 23/11/2020

**Time:** 10-12 am

**Description:** *The questions of what accounts as knowledge, who has knowledge and who does not have knowledge constitute some of the key questions in the politics of knowledge in Africa. At the centre of politics of knowledge are also issues of theft of history, epistemicides, linguicides, and*



*alienations. African intellectuals are products of the modern westernized university and this has long-standing impact on their psyche and consciousness. The advantage is that it makes them part of the global knowledge workers and the disadvantage is that their immersion into modern knowledge entailed abandonment of their African culture, history and African ways of knowing. This seminar discusses three issues the formation, their consciousness of African intellectuals, and generations of African intellectuals.*

**Reading:**

- Thandika Mkandawire. 1995. 'Three Generations of African Academics: A Note.' *Transformation*, 28, pp. 75-83.
- Francis Njubi Nesbit. 2008. 'Review Article: Post-Colonial Anxieties: (Re)presenting African Intellectuals.' *African Affairs*, 107(427), pp. 273-287.
- Jean Allen. 2019. '#HeskovitsMustFall? A Meditation on Whiteness, African Studies, and the Unfinished Business of 1968.' *African Studies Review*, 62(3), pp. 6-39.

**3. African Intellectual and Ideological Productions.**

**Date:** 30/11/2020

**Time:** 10-12 am

**Description:** Despite the epistemic damages inflicted by the cognitive empire, African intellectuals have not been passive in resisting epistemological colonization. They have been resisting, contesting and countering Eurocentric knowledge. This seminar discusses African intellectual and ideological productions and how they responded and contested Eurocentric knowledge, beginning with how African intellectuals disproved the notion of an Africa without history and knowledge.

**Reading:**

- Bethwell A. Ogot. 2009. '#Rereading the History and Historiography of Epistemic Domination and Resistance in Africa.' *African Studies Review*, 52(1), pp. 1-22.
- Paulin Hountodji. 2009. 'Knowledge of Africa, Knowledge by Africans: Two Perspectives on African Studies.' *RCC Annual Review*, 1(1), pp. 121-131.
- Dani Wadada Nabudere. 2007. 'Cheikh Anta Diop: The Social Sciences, Humanities, Physical and Natural Sciences and Interdisciplinarity.' *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, 2(1), pp. 6-34.

**4. The Africanization and Decolonization of the University in Africa**



**Date:** 7/12/2020

**Time:** 10-12 am

**Description:** *Africa had some of the earliest universities in the world in such places as Mali, Morocco, and Egypt. These were precolonial African universities that were not part of the present westernized global university system. However, these institutions did not continue into modern era. Hence Africa has to 'receive' universities from elsewhere during the colonial era. These institutions were part of Euromodernity's colonization of the world. This is why one finds African anti-colonial nationalists not just agitating for African universities but also trying the Africanize existing universities in Africa. This seminar is focused on the question of universities in Africa as sites of struggles and discusses the key decolonizing initiatives since the 1960s.*

#### 5. The Crisis in African Higher Education and Neoliberal Coloniality of Markets

**Date:** 14/12/2020

**Time:** 10-12am

**Description:** By the mid-1970s African higher education plunged into crisis because of a combination of factors such as economic crisis, rise of authoritarianism (one party states and military juntas), Cold War ideological coloniality, and impact of the Washington Consensus and its neoliberal philosophies. The African public university system suffered a deep crisis as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were unfolding in the 1980s and 1990s. Conceptions of knowledge underwent commercialization, commodification and corporatization. Universities were invaded by corporate cultures that turned them into 'market places.' This seminar focuses on this era where students were redefined as customers, intellectual productions were subjected to quantification and universities suffered from managerialism with its log-frames.

**Reading:**

- Tande Akin Aina. 2010. 'Beyond Reforms: The Politics of Higher Education Transformation in Africa.' *African Studies Review*, 53(1), pp. 21-40.
- Paul Tiyambe Zeleza. 2003. 'Academic Freedom in the Neo-Liberal Order: Governments, Globalization, Governance and Gender.' *Journal of Higher Education*, 1(1), pp. 149-194.
- Akilagpa Sawyerr. 2004. 'Challenges Facing African Universities: Selected Issues.' *African Studies Review*, 47(1), pp. 1-59.

#### 6. 'Turns' in African Knowledge Production



**Date:** 11/1/2021

**Time:** 10-12 am

**Description:** African knowledge production has experienced many intellectual and academic 'turns' beginning with the 'colonial turn' dated to the time of colonial encounters. This seminar discusses the key 'turns' in African knowledge production such as the 'nationalist turn,' the 'Marxist turn,' the 'cultural turn,' the 'feminist turn,' the 'neoliberal turn,' the 'postcolonial turn,' right up the current 'decolonial turn', and how these turns impacted on the understanding of Africa.

**Reading:**

- Ramon Grosfoguel. 2007. 'The Decolonial Epistemic Turn: Beyond Political-Economy Paradigms.' *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3), pp. 211-223.
- Paul Tiyambe Zeleza. 2006. 'The Troubled Encounter Between Postcolonialism and African History.' *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 17(2), pp. 89-129.
- Jane L. Parpart. 1995. 'Is Africa A Postmodern Invention?' *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, 23(1), pp. 16-18.
- Rita Abrahamsen. 2003. 'African Studies and the Postcolonial Challenge.' *African Affairs*, 102, pp. 189-210.

## 7. The Global Political Economy of Knowledge

**Date:** 18/1/2020

**Time:** 10-12 am

**Description:** A global republic of letters is upon us together with its global protocols, standards, measurements, and rankings. This reality has generated debates about a possible human commonwealth of knowledge enabled by increased planetary human entanglements. One strand of debate is that there is even nothing called Western/European knowledge because that knowledge is fed by other knowledges. The argument is also that binaries and dichotomies of North-South and Centre-Periphery no longer make sense in a globalized world. It is within this context that the notion of global economy of knowledge and global studies has arisen. This seminar discusses the logics and critiques of this notion of a global economy of knowledge and raises questions of the resilient uneven intellectual and academic division of labour as well as the continued hegemony of Eurocentric knowledge.

**Reading:**

- Mahmood Mamdani. 2016. 'Between the Public Intellectual and the Scholar: Decolonization and Some Post-Independence Initiatives in Higher Education.' *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 17(1), pp. 68-83.



- Achille Mbembe. 2016. 'Decolonizing the University: New Directions.' *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 15(1), pp. 29-45.
- Birgit Brock-Utne. 1999. 'African Higher Universities and the African Heritage.' *International Review of Education*, 45(1), pp. 87-104.

## 8. Engendering Knowledge and Scholarship on Africa

**Date:** 25/1/2021

**Time:** 10-12am

**Description:** The problem of patriarchy and androcentrism bedeviling modern society is also endemic in knowledge and scholarship. Across the world there is resilient male dominance in knowledge production and scholarship. This seminar discusses the necessity and politics of engendering knowledge and scholarship on Africa. It posits the urgent need for depatriarchization of knowledge and scholarship through privileging the feminist and womanist archives and such concepts as intersectionalization of knowledge.

**Reading:**

- Oyeronke Oyewumi. 2002. 'Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies.' *JENdA: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, 2(1), pp. 3-24.
- Ayesha M. Imam. 1997. 'Engendering African Social Sciences: An Introductory Essay.' In A. M Imam, A: Mama and F. Sow (eds.). *Engendering Africans Social Sciences*. Dakar: CODESRIA Book Series, pp. 1-25.
- Amina Mama. 2001. 'Challenging Subjects: Gender and Power in African Contexts.' *African Sociological Review*, 5(2), pp. 63-73.

## 9. The Rhodes Must Fall Movements

**Date:** 1/2/2021

**Time:** 10-12am

**Description:** The outbreak of the Rhodes Must Fall movements in South Africa in 2015 and 2016 producing other formations such as Fees Must Fall constituted a necessary rupture in the knowledge domain and forced universities in South Africa in particular to take the agenda of decolonization of the university seriously. This seminar focuses of these student movements, their demands, their politics and their impact on the global knowledge project and the universities in Africa.



## **10. The Black Lives Matter Movements and Planetary Decolonization of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**Date:** 8/2/2021

**Time:** 10-12am

**Description:** The death of George Floyd in the United States of America galvanized a planetary decolonization struggles whose key signature was the toppling of statues and monuments of celebrating figures that dehumanized black people through slavery, colonialism and apartheid. While the statues and monuments became the soft targets, the planetary decolonization of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is broader and confronts issues of racism at a world scale. This seminar focuses on the Black Lives Matter movements and their advancement of decolonization.

## **11. The Current Conjuncture: Resurgent and Insurgent Decolonization.**

**Date:** 15/2/2021

**Time:** 10-12am

**Description:** This closing seminar is about the key features of the current times and re-assessment of the future of resurgent and insurgent decolonization, particularly its implications for reconfiguration of African Studies.