

ZMO-Colloquium

Thursday, 30 January 2020, 5 pm, ZMO

Arts, Humanities, and Social Science Knowledge Making: Thoughts on Research on, for, with, in, and of Africa

Lecture by **Saleem Badat** (Mellon Research Fellow, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal)

Unequal social relations powerfully affect who produces knowledge, whose and what knowledges are valued, privileged, and subordinated, in what languages knowledge is produced, who has voice, who publishes and what is published. They shape the knowledge orientations and agendas of universities in the north and the global south, impinge on notions of quality and standards, and on a host of other matters related to knowledge making, sharing, and dissemination.

Interest on the part of universities in other parts of the world in undertaking arts, humanities, and social science research on Africa is to be welcomed. The critical question is: what is the purpose for undertaking research on Africa? I approach this issue of purpose as an institutional question, rather than one to do with the preferences of individual faculty, though institutional positions are, of course, shaped by the interests, concerns, and proclivities of individual faculty.

Beyond the question of the purpose for undertaking research on Africa, there are questions of the goals of such research, its specific objectives, the strategies that are to be deployed, the time horizons, resourcing, and so forth. As with the question of purpose, critical issues arise when the questions of goals, strategies, and so forth are not treated as self-evident, but confronted with appropriate critical reflexivity.

Saleem Badat holds qualifications from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Boston University, and a PhD in Sociology from the University of York. Currently a Mellon Research Fellow, between 2014 and 2018 he served as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's first Program Director of International Higher Education & Strategic Projects. Saleem is author of *Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid*, and *Black Man, You are on Your Own*; co-author of *National Policy and a Regional Response in South African Higher Education*, and co-editor of *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles in South Africa*. In 2013 Brill published his latest book, *The Forgotten People: Political Banishment under Apartheid*.

His numerous book chapters, journal articles, policy reports, and newspaper opinion pieces are concerned especially with questions of equity, redress, and social justice in and through universities, and the decolonization and transformation of universities in societies that were colonized.