Digital Decolonisation & Digital Justice Conference

T2O SOUTH AFRICA 2025

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

ACEPS
THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR EPISTEMOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

13-14 August 2025
Level 1 @ UJ on Empire
University of Johannesburg
Zoom link: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/-Vv64uXdS76bSo4s6fyytA

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

ORGANISERS: *Dr Paige Benton, Prof Karen Frost-Arnold, Prof Veli Mitova, Mr Francis Mkandawire, Ms Shené De Rijk and Mr Dimpho Molestane.*

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Concept Note

Digital Decolonisation and Digital Justice is a two-day, interdisciplinary conference that investigates the decolonisation of digital technologies shaping contemporary knowledge and global power dynamics. The hybrid conference will be held online and in person at UJ on Empire.

Digital technologies are deeply embedded in how we produce and share knowledge. At the same time, our digital infrastructure for sharing knowledge is primarily designed and maintained by tech companies in the Global North that pursue profit by exploiting citizens and communities in the Global South. For example, social media companies profit from hate speech that inflames ethnic tensions. Tech companies exploit the labour of workers from the Global South to train algorithms. AI has significant environmental costs, which the Global South disproportionately bears. Citizens of the Global South are often excluded from the benefits of digital technologies. Technologies are usually designed without consideration for their interests, languages, cultures, or material circumstances. This conference speaks directly to South Africa's G20 theme of 'Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability'. By amplifying the voices of Global South researchers, particularly early-career researchers from Africa, as well as academics from Brazil and India, this event strengthens South–South collaboration. Moreover, this event advocates for fairer access and design in the digital space to safeguard digital infrastructure from perpetuating colonial hierarchies, thus focusing on how today's current design decisions will impact future generations.

This conference aims to bring together a diverse range of experts from around the world, including those from Africa, India, Brazil, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom, representing disciplines such as philosophy, science and technology studies (STS), media studies, information science, communications, data science, computer science, political science, and other academic fields working on decolonisation and technology. This conference actively contributes to amplifying the voices of those who have historically been underrepresented. This conference will help strengthen the T20 process by providing a platform for marginalised voices and facilitating collaborative exchange between scholars from the Global South and the Global North. The conference directly contributes to T20 Task Force 2 (Digital Transformation) and the G20 High-Level Deliverables Task Force 3 (Artificial Intelligence, Data Governance and Innovation for Sustainable Development) by addressing how Big Tech and digital technologies entrench global inequalities. Topics to be discussed by experts and early-career researchers include decolonising the internet, alternative and postcolonial technologies, Indigenous knowledge and AI, Democracy and AI, Climate justice and AI, Digital harms and technological epistemic injustice, justice for digital harms, sustainable digital governance, and resistance and refusal theory. By focusing on these themes, the conference helps deepen and diversify the T20 knowledge ecosystem around AI and data governance.

To this end, the conference aims to share research insights from academic experts into clear and actionable engagement points for a blog on the T20 website, as well as to create a public engagement piece in The Conversation to promote public engagement on core G20 issues before the T20 summit in November.

Digital Decolonisation & Digital Justice Day 1 Conference Program	
Time	Session
08:55 – 09:00	Welcome & Opening Remarks
09:00 – 10:00 Chair: Veli Mitova	Keynote Address: Prof Seydina Moussa Ndiaye Cheikh Hamidou Kane Digital University (Senegal) *Digital Decolonisation and Global Framing*
Reflection on 4IR Chair: Paige Benton	
10:00 – 10:30	Patrick Bond Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg *The Fourth Industrial Counter-Revolution's progress in South Africa*
10:30 – 11:00	Morning Coffee Break
Digital Extraction Continued Chair: Shené de Ryk	
11:00 – 11:30	Chantelle Gray University of Johannesburg, Department of Philosophy *Say Her Name: Remembering Anarcha, Betsey, and Lucy in Thinking About Algorithmic Justice*
11:30 – 12:00	Danni Deans PhD Candidate, Glasglow University *Credibility Tourism: the phenomena of online race faking*
12:30 – 13:00	Chileshe Mulenga, Cavendish University Zambia Daniel Novotny, University of South Bohemia *AI in Medical Diagnosis among Patients in Developing Countries: An Ethical Analysis of Algorithmic influence and the Principle of Justice*
13:00 – 13:30	Thabo Motshweni Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg *Artificial Intelligence and the Climate Crisis: A Critique of Techno-Optimism*
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
Ethics, Identity, and Intercultural Disruption Chair: Martin Miragoli	
14:30 – 15:00	Ching Lam Janice Law Chinese University of Hong Kong *Host, Guest, Enemy: Rethinking Digital Colonialism through Derrida's Aporia of Hospitality*

15:00 – 15:30	Kristy Claassen University of Twente and part of the Ethics of Socially Disruptive Technology (ESDIT) consortium *Disruption Decentered: Toward a Framework for Intercultural Conceptual Disruption*
15:30 – 16:00	Sarah Godsell Wits Education School *Digital Decolonisation and Digital Justice: Digital Harms and Technological Epistemic Injustice*
16:00- 16:30	Afternoon Break
16:30 – 17:30 Chair: Paige Benton	**Global South Policy Panel Discussion:** Prof Emma Ruttkamp-Bloem, University of Pretoria, South Africa Prof Seydina Ndiaye, Cheikh Hamidou Kane Digital University, Senegal. Dr Roland Banya, Research ICT Africa, South Africa. *This panel examines the pressing need for AI policy frameworks that align with the priorities, values, and realities of the Global South. Key themes include data sovereignty, infrastructural inequality, language and cultural representation, indigenous knowledge systems, and the geopolitical implications of AI deployment. The panel will also highlight emerging policy efforts, regional cooperation, and community-driven strategies for ethical and equitable AI futures in the Global South*

Digital Decolonisation & Digital Justice Day 2 Conference Program	
Time	Session
09:00 – 10:00 Chair: Karen Frost-Arnold	Keynote Address 2: Dr Michael Kwet Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg and Yale Research Fellow *Decolonising Digital Studies*
Digital Extraction Chair: Franco Mkandawire	
10:00 – 10:30	Karabo Maiyane Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University *Who owns or should own our African data? Exploring a plausible model for data ownership in Africa*
10:30 – 11:00	Morning Coffee Break
Epistemic (In)Justice in Digital Worlds Chair: Harry Kapatika	
11:00 – 11:30	Abraham Tobi The Centre for Research in Ethics in Montreal, Canada. *Epistemic Obligations Online*
11:30 – 12:00	Juan Poyates University of Auckland *Can virtue epistemology decolonise digital worlds?*

12:00 – 12:30	
Digital Resistance in Latin American	
Chair: Nomaswazi Kubeka	
12:30 – 13:00	Tomás Cajueiro Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona *Digital Coloniality and the Struggle for Epistemic Plurality: Journalism Collectives as Agents of Refusal and Reparation*
13:00 – 13:30	Alexsandro Cosmo de Mesquita - NGO Thydewa Prof Helen Kennedy - University of Sheffield *Decolonising Digital Futures: Indigenous Manifestos and Digital Good Living in Latin America*
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
Digital Justice	
Chair: Karen Frost-Arnold	
14:30 – 15:00	Cecy Edijala Balogun Center for the Study of Race, Gender and Class, University of Johannesburg *Digital Rights and Digital Wrongs: Analysis of Policy Gaps and Justice Mechanisms for Digital Harms in Nigeria and South Africa*
15:00 – 15:30	Paige Benton The African Centre for Epistemology & Philosophy of Science, University of Johannesburg *Digital Justice Requires Digital Reparations*
15:30-16:00	Emma Ruttkamp-Bloem University of Pretoria, CAIR *The Geopolitics of AI*
16:00 – 16:30	Afternoon Break
16:30 – 17:30 Chair: Dimpho Moletsane	**Centering Global South Scholarship in Decolonial Futures Panel Discussion:** Prof Karen Frost-Arnold, Philosophy Department, Hobart & William Smith Colleges, USA. Prof Tshepo Madlingozi, Full-time Commissioner of the South African Human Rights Commission Dr Abe Tobi, Postdoctoral Fellow with the Canada Research Chair on Epistemic Injustice and Agency and the Centre for Research in Ethics in Montreal, Canada. *This panel examines how institutions, scholars, and policymakers in the Global North can meaningfully support and amplify the work of Global South scholars in the ongoing struggle for decolonization. Panelists will discuss structural barriers, building equitable partnerships, supporting autonomous knowledge production, and creating platforms where Global South can lead global discourses on technology and decolonization.*
17:30 – 17:35	Final Reflections & Conference Close

Speakers' Biographies & Abstracts

Alphabetised Order by First Name

Abraham Tobi
Centre for Research in Ethics in Montreal, Canada.

Abraham Tobi is a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Canada Research Chair on Epistemic Injustice and Agency and the Centre for Research in Ethics in Montreal, Canada. He is also a research associate at the African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science (ACEPS) in Johannesburg, South Africa. In spring 2025, he was a DFI Visiting Fellow at Tilburg University, Netherlands. His primary research interest lies at the intersection of normative and social epistemology, focusing on epistemic injustice, oppression, and decolonisation. His research has been published in various journals like *Episteme, Social Epistemology, and Topoi.* He has also taught philosophy at both the University of Johannesburg and the University of Pretoria. In spring 2026, he will be joining the Rotman Institute of Philosophy at Western University as a Postdoctoral Fellow.

Epistemic Obligations Online

Suppose I form a bad belief. In that case, the literature on epistemic responsibility tells us that I have violated some epistemic obligation(s) and am thus epistemically blameworthy. However, if I have an excuse or exemption for violating my epistemic obligations, I am either entirely or partially blameless for forming that belief. Nonideal epistemic environments, like the internet, are rife with excuses. While some have argued that the nature of the internet provides us with excuses or exemptions when we form bad beliefs, I argue here for a caveat to that claim. When we form some morally relevant bad beliefs online, we are blameworthy insofar as it follows from pernicious forms of ignorance.

Alexsandro Cosmo de Mesquita & Helen Kennedy
NGO Thydewa & University of Sheffield & University of Sheffield

Dr. Alexandro Cosmo de Mesquita is a researcher and Instructional Designer at the Ngo Thydéwa, and currently a Fellow at the University of Sheffield, where he is developing his research about Indigenous People and Digital Good Living with the support of the ESRC Digital Good Network.

Helen Kennedy FBA FacSS is Professor of Digital Society at the University of Sheffield, Director of the ESRC Digital Good Network, and Director of the Living With Data research programme, all in the UK. The Digital Good Network asks what a good digital society looks like and how we get there, centring the views of minoritised and Global Majority people in its answers to these questions.

Decolonising Digital Futures: Indigenous Manifestos and Digital Good Living in Latin America

This paper presents reflections and outcomes from the project Indigenous Peoples and Digital Good Living, a decolonial research initiative developed in partnership with Indigenous leaders, artists, and scholars from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador. The project builds on the results of a previous initiative titled INDIGENIA – Generative AI for Indigenous Futures and Digital Good Living, one of whose outcomes was the creation of a manifesto authored by nine Indigenous peoples from Latin America. The manifesto articulates guidelines for the ethical and respectful development of digital technologies, rooted in Indigenous worldviews, knowledge systems, and spiritual traditions. Although generative AI is increasingly used in artistic production, policymaking, and education, Indigenous peoples are rarely consulted in the creation of these tools. On the contrary, many of these systems extract data without consent, reproduce stereotypes, and ignore cultural sensitivities. The Indigenous Peoples and Digital Good Living project responds to this injustice by proposing a framework of digital sovereignty, co-creation, and technological ethics grounded in Indigenous cosmologies. The project adopts an action-research methodology that not only examines the social implications of AI and digital platforms but also facilitates participatory workshops with Indigenous leaders, researchers, artists, and youth. These workshops aim to iterate the manifesto, reflect on its principles in diverse community contexts, and design actions that translate its content into lived practices and political advocacy. A central feature of this work is that Indigenous peoples are not objects of study but researchers themselves and of themselves— leading the process of digital critique and imagining alternative, decolonised digital futures. This paper contributes to debates on epistemic decolonisation, resistance to algorithmic colonisation, and Indigenous-led strategies for justice and reparation. We explore questions such as: What does digital justice look like for communities historically excluded from technological design? How can Indigenous knowledge inform the ethics and governance of emerging digital systems? And how can collaborative, cross-border efforts contribute to a plural and inclusive digital society? By focusing on the technological critique of Indigenous communities, this research challenges dominant narratives

of innovation and offers concrete steps toward digital decolonisation and explores Indigenous agency in shaping digital futures and the power of manifestos as tools for advocacy and structural transformation.

Cecy Edijala Balogun
Centre for the Study of Race, Gender and Class, University of Johannesburg

Dr Cecy Edijala Balogun is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Race, Gender and Class, University of Johannesburg. Before commencing her Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Johannesburg, she worked as a Research Fellow at the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER). She holds a PhD in Agriculture (Rural Sociology) from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. As a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Race, Gender and Class, she is the unit head for Social Policy and Mobility. Cecy explores the complexities of rural livelihoods, women and gender issues, youth studies, social and public policies, group dynamics and community development. She has over seven years of experience in researching social issues in Africa. She is a fellow of the CODESRIA College of Mentors and Mentees (2019), CODESRIA Gender and Governance Institutes (2021), Ife Summer Research School (2021), Writing and Researching Inequality in Africa (2021-2024), British Academy-sponsored, Bergen Summer Research School (2024). She is a member of professional bodies like the International Public Policy Association, Rural Sociology Association of Nigeria, Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria, CODESRIA, and the African Studies Research Forum. She has presented academic papers at national and international conferences. She has contributed to several books, book chapters, and some of her research outputs have also been published as monographs.

Thematic Area: Justice for Digital Harms

The paper examines dynamics in digital harms and policies to protect digital users in Africa, using Nigeria and South Africa as case studies. Digital technologies have provided opportunities for innovation, economic development and civic participation globally, with Africa experiencing acceleration of digital usage across all spectrums of social, economic and political spheres. Notwithstanding the advantages of digital technologies, they are also increasingly contributing to diverse forms of harm, ranging from cyberbullying, data breaches to surveillance, online gender-based violence and the spread of misinformation. With the positive gains of digital platforms weaved around societal economic and social development, it is important to protect the rights of users and ensure accountability for digital harms. In most African countries, poor digital governance frameworks continue to expose digital platform users, including women, youth, civil society organisations that advocate for citizens' rights to diverse forms of digital harms. A digitally inclusive society ensures that citizens enjoy some freedom of expression, data protection and access to redress. On the contrary, undermining these rights makes the digital spaces unsafe and discourages participation, thereby limiting the potential for social and economic prosperity and democratic dialogue. The paper argues that with increasing use of digital platforms, exposure to digital harm is dynamic, with different segments of society differentially affected. Apart from individuals who are potentially digitally exposed depending on their sociodemographic status and purposes for use of digital platforms, civil society organisations and media advocates also constitute another segment of society that suffer digital harm. Hence, the study seeks to examine the dynamics in digital harm in Nigeria and South Africa, justice mechanisms to protect victims of digital harms, identify policy and implementation gaps and map out the digital justice ecosystem to address the menace. The study will use primary data collected from state and non-state institutions in Nigeria and South Africa. Stakeholders critical to citizens' data protection, legal personnel and digital rights advocates in Nigeria and South Africa will participate in the study. The collected data will be analysed and findings

discussed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings from the research will contribute to better policies to protect the rights of digital users, including individuals, politically exposed persons, digital rights advocates and safer more equitable digital spaces in Nigeria and South Africa. It will also identify key stakeholders in the justice ecosystem with clear cut responsibilities, that if implemented, will contribute to better digital usage in both countries

Chantelle Gray
Department of Philosophy, University of Johannesburg

Prof Chantelle Gray is a contemporary Continental philosopher whose interests span critical algorithm studies, queer theory, experimental music studies, cognitive studies, decolonisation, environmental studies, animal liberation, anarchism and Continental philosophy, especially the work of Deleuze and Guattari. The interdisciplinary nature of her work allows her to ask critical questions about how to take care of humans, technologies and ecologies in the digital age. By intersecting philosophical and other studies on algorithms, societies and environments, her work draws out myriad transversal lines, including race, gender, cultural politics, algorithmic violence and their attendant ethical implications.

Say Her Name: Remembering Anarcha, Betsey, and Lucy in Thinking About Algorithmic Justice

Although sometimes imagined as disembodied virtual avatars, our data-selves are deeply embedded in novel technological arrangements with very material effects, some of which result in an epistemological and subjective flattening aimed at optimisation and prediction. These processes are themselves deeply implicated in racialising frames which Dan McQuillan (2022) refers to as "soft eugenic" practices that surface a deeper socio-political calculus, so further entrenching the uneven distributions of advantage and suffering. In this paper, I trace the narratives of three women – known only as Anarcha, Betsey and Lucy – to argue that AI-driven industrial labour processes draw heavily on the technologies and surveillance mechanisms developed on plantations. My aim is not to reify certain historically locked identities but, instead, to mobilise the figure of the plantation in exposing the often-circular logics of extraction that prefigure the guiding recursive principles of contemporary machine learning methods, especially as they relate to vulnerability and addiction. These new closed-loop epistemological arrangements, I go on to argue, continually assimilate subjectivities into computerised temporalities that grant the digital illegitimate authority over the radical immanence of lived life. In addressing the interrelated theses presented here, I propose an alternative posture – one which refuses the violence of sufficiency according to which the structure of possibility is one of optimised prediction, rather than experiments in freedom.

Ching Lam Janice Law
Chinese University of Hong Kong

Janice Ching Lam Law is a PhD student in Philosophy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her research focuses on contemporary French philosophy, especially the works of Jacques Derrida and Paul Ricoeur. She is particularly interested in questions of language, ethics, and narrative identity in relation to modern experiences of alienation and acceleration. She is also a Lecturer at Hong Kong Baptist University, teaches courses in moral and political philosophy.

Host, Guest, Enemy: Rethinking Digital Colonialism through Derrida's Aporia of Hospitality

This paper rethinks digital colonialism on social media platforms and the infrastructural dominance of big tech corporations from the Global North through the lens of Jacques Derrida's aporetic concept of hospitality. While digital platforms often brand themselves as spaces of openness and global connectivity, they enact a form of conditional hospitality that mirrors colonial structures of control: users from the Global South are invited as guests, yet only within tightly controlled, surveilled, and extractive frameworks. They are welcome, but only as long as they do not threaten the sovereignty of the host— here, the tech corporation that controls the "home" of the platform. Derrida's distinction between conditional and unconditional hospitality allows us to interrogate these dynamics with philosophical depth. Conditional hospitality, tied to rights, laws, and borders, always affirms the mastery of the host. In digital terms, it manifests in algorithmic gatekeeping, linguistic hegemony, and exploitative datafication—welcoming the Global South only when it serves the host's interest. Conversely, Derrida's ideal of unconditional hospitality—the impossible but necessary openness to the anonymous, undocumented Other— demands a radical ethics that would decentre platform sovereignty and open up digital infrastructures to genuine plurality, even at the cost of control and stability. The paper argues that tech platforms' self-image as "hosts" becomes ethically untenable when their hospitality turns into hostility: when content moderation perpetuates structural racism, when users are exploited as unpaid digital labourers, and when environmental burdens are externalised onto vulnerable communities. Drawing on Derrida's claim that hospitality is always haunted by its possibility of turning into hostility, I propose a deconstructive critique of digital inclusion narratives. Rather than advocating for a naïve digital openness, this paper calls for a reconfiguration of the digital commons through Derrida's aporetic lens— acknowledging the impossibility of absolute hospitality while striving toward a more just, heterogeneous, and decolonised digital future.

Chileshe Mulenga
Cavendish University Zambia

Daniel Novotny
The University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Czechia.

Dr. Chileshe Mulenga is a Senior Research Fellow in the Urban Development Research Programme at the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Zambia. She has a strong academic background, including studies at Cavendish University Zambia, and has contributed extensively to research on urbanisation, food insecurity, and public health in Zambia. Her work includes studies such as *ARV Treatment in Zambia: Current Issues* and *The State of Food Insecurity in Lusaka, Zambia*, reflecting a deep engagement with the social and economic challenges affecting urban populations. In addition to her academic work, she has held policy-oriented roles, including service as an economist within the Government of the Republic of Zambia. Dr. Mulenga's research blends academic rigor with practical relevance, particularly in addressing the intersections of urban development, poverty, and health policy.

Daniel D. Novotný is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Czechia. He is also affiliated with several academic and research institutions, including the Karel Čapek Center for Values in Science and Technology in Prague, the Centre for Philosophy of Epidemiology, Medicine, and Public Health in Johannesburg and Durham, and the National Center for Ontological Research in Buffalo, New York. Novotný specializes in metaphysics, epistemology, applied ethics, and the history of Western philosophy, particularly the philosophical traditions of the 17th and 18th centuries. His work often focuses on Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy, both in its historical development and contemporary relevance. He serves as editor-in-chief of *Studia Neoaristotelica: A Journal of Analytical Scholasticism* and is actively involved in national-level committees on bioethics, transportation, and artificial intelligence.

AI in Medical Diagnosis among Patients in Developing Countries: An Ethical Analysis of Algorithmic Influence and the Principle of Justice

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) by medical practitioners is rapidly transforming diagnostic and treatment processes within the healthcare system (Topol, 2019). AI has clearly enhanced medical diagnostics by accelerating data analysis, reducing human error, and improving hospital workflows, all made possible through advanced algorithmic data processing (Esteva et al., 2017; Obermeyer & Emanuel, 2016). However, despite these notable benefits, the deployment of AI in medical contexts raises critical ethical and socio-political concerns, particularly in this era of rapid technological change. In many developing nations, where technological infrastructure remains nascent, the introduction of AI in healthcare risks imposing a form of digital colonization. This occurs when foreign digital frameworks, often designed for fundamentally different healthcare contexts, are systematically introduced into African medical systems, potentially side-lining local needs and realities (Birhane, 2020). Studies have shown that many AI systems for medical treatment are trained predominantly on data from populations in developed nations, leading to algorithmic outputs that may be biased or insufficient for other populations (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018). This can result in systematic underrepresentation and poorer outcomes for racial minorities, women, and low-income patients, exacerbating existing healthcare inequalities and contributing to epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007; Benjamin, 2019, Smart, forthcoming). Furthermore, issues related to transparency, accountability, and regulatory oversight present significant ethical and legal challenges.

Therefore, in light of these challenges, this paper seeks to investigate how AI algorithms in medical contexts might perpetuate digital colonisation and compromise health equity and patient rights. It also aims to underscore the importance of ethical, policy-driven frameworks that promote digital decolonisation, justice, accountability, and fairness in the deployment of AI in healthcare. While recent advances in AI, along with the associated hype around artificial general intelligence (AGI), are often overstated (Landgrebe & Smith, 2025), this nonetheless highlights the critical need for human judgment in making genuinely moral decisions, which AI alone cannot fulfil.

Danni Deans
The University of Glasgow

Danni Deans is a PhD researcher and artist at the University of Glasgow working within Epistemology and Feminist Philosophy. They have written on topics around Epistemic Injustice, with a focus on social media and online spaces, combining six years of tech industry experience with feminist epistemologies to comment on social identity in the virtual world.

Credibility Hijacking: the phenomena of online race faking

Online, racialisation takes on a disembodied status that stands in tension with offline racial embodiment (Alcoff, 2006). I use three case studies of race faking online (digital brown and yellow facing) to explore this relationship to race in online spaces. I highlight what each white race-faker in my case studies stands to gain from pretending to be a person of colour online: credibility. Further, I explain how the disembodied state of race online facilitates this act of credibility hijacking. Through this, I formulate the concept of 'credibility hijacking,' to encapsulate such phenomena: When an agent assumes the identity of a marginalised group they don't belong to in online spaces. That agent makes use of i) a marginalised social identity and ii) how marginalised identities are easily treated like fungible costumes on social media, to co-opt credibility that would be assigned to that social identity, often through avenues that would garner PCE, for testimony on certain topics. I present 'credibility hijacking' as a conceptual tool that explicates the unifying aspect to each case of race-faking presented: acquisition of testimonial credibility, and how this gain is facilitated by the features of social media.

Emma Ruttkamp-Bloem
Department of Philosophy, University of Pretoria, Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research

Emma Ruttkamp-Bloem is the current Chair of UNESCO's World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) and a former member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Body on AI. She is professor and head of the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria and leads the ethics of AI research group at the Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research (CAIR) in South Africa. She was the chairperson of the Ad Hoc Expert Group that drafted the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, which was adopted by 193 Member States in 2021, and contributed to developing implementation tools for the Recommendation. She is a member of the Global Academic Network, Centre for AI and Digital Policy, Washington DC and has worked in projects related to AI ethics with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA)-NEPAD and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR). She is a member of various international AI ethics advisory boards ranging from the inter-governmental sector (as expert for the Global Commission on Responsible AI in the Military Domain), to the private sector (e.g., SAP SE), and academia (e.g., the Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems and Software Programme Human Sciences). She is an associate editor for Science and Engineering Ethics. Emma is on the 2022 list of the '100 Brilliant Women in AI Ethics' compiled annually by the Women in AI Ethics global initiative. She is a founding member of the Southern African Conference for AI Research.

The geopolitics of AI

Since the beginning of data-driven AI ethics debates about a decade ago, there have been voices calling for analysing the political aspects of the Big Tech business plan of AI. In the literature, this business plan is known as surveillance capitalism, which implies that the commodification of data for profit angle to this business plan is in fact focused on political power as much as on profit. Recently, writers such as Karen Hao, Kate Crawford, Joy Buolamwini, Emily Bender, and Timnit Gebru have all written about the 'empire of AI' and the plan behind it in various ways. This is complimented by recent warnings from Ian Bremmer and Mustafa Suleyman about the 'AI power paradox'. This term refers to the geo-political implications of a new technological global order that is separate from the security order and the economic order, and whose main role players are technology companies. This tutorial will unpack the implications of this power paradox and AI empire building for an African AI business plan in the context of the hopefully soon to see the light South African National AI Policy.

Karabo Maiyane
The Department of Philosophy at Nelson Mandela University

Dr Karabo Maiyane is a Philosophy lecturer and Head of Department at Nelson Mandela University. His research focuses on moral and political philosophy, applied ethics, and the ethics of artificial intelligence. He holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Pretoria, where his doctoral research examined the intersection of AI ethics and human dignity. Dr Maiyane's broader academic interests include the ethics of technology, just war theory, ethics of care, healthcare ethics, and African philosophical traditions. His recent publications are titled *"Robots and Dignity: An Afro-communitarian Argument in Eldercare"* and *"Autonomous Weapons and the Future of Warfare in Africa,"*.

Who owns or should own our African data? Exploring a plausible model for data ownership in Africa

In the book chapter Relationality and Data Justice for Trustworthy AI Practices in Africa, Ruttkamp-Bloem (2025) proposes the concept of AI justice defined as "justice for every inhabitant of the African continent who engages in AI technology at any stage of its lifecycle," as a framework to challenge the prevailing Big Tech business model, which prioritizes data extraction for profit over the needs of local communities. The pursuit of AI justice, she argues, is essential for positioning Africa as an equitable participant in the global AI ecosystem. Central to this vision is the assertion that "African data, and the power it brings, should remain in the hands of the inhabitants of the continent." While this proposition is compelling, it raises acritical question about data ownership in Africa: Who should own the data, individuals, communities, or the state? This paper explores this question with the aim of identifying a plausible structure for data ownership on the continent. Using the idea of data sovereignty as a potential framework, this paper argues for a two-pronged solution: first, that governments should invest in the development of national data centres to retain control over data infrastructure, and second, that they must strengthen regulatory frameworks governing data extraction and usage by external entities. These measures would be essential for advancing data justice and ensuring Africa's agency in the AI lifecycle.

Juanma Poyatos
University of Auckland, New Zealand

Juanma Poyatos completed his undergraduate degree in Philosophy and his Master's in Philosophy and Modern Culture at the University of Seville (Spain). He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Auckland (New Zealand), working under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Jesús Navarro (University of Seville), Dr. Matheson Russell, and Dr. Krushil Watene (University of Auckland). His doctoral thesis, titled *Is epistemic justice possible? Relations of epistemic violence and the democratic project*, examines how oppressive structures of meaning-making are not merely a matter of individual beliefs or group biases, but are upheld by the environments in which they operate. From this perspective, epistemic violence should not be understood simply as a deviation from a rational ideal of justification, but rather as something often inscribed within the very architecture of meaning that governs our practices of understanding. These architectures shape not only what can be understood, but also how it can be understood.

Beyond truth-tracking: epistemic justice in digital technologies.

Emerging scientific and technological disciplines often present developments such as artificial intelligence as neutral tools to enhance cognition and improve human life. Yet the very idea of "progress" is far from universal. It is imbued with values that are inescapable in its everyday functioning (see Dieguez, 2024). Progress is shaped by Eurocentric, technocratic, and colonial worldviews that assume well-being can be universally measured and addressed through standardized solutions (Harding, 1991). This obscures the plurality of lived experiences, marginalizing ways of life—even within the same communities. As a result, digital technologies risk reinforcing epistemic exclusions under the guise of neutrality and innovation (Benjamin, 2019). Despite claims of neutrality, AI systems are trained within ontologies and interpretive frameworks rooted in Western epistemic commitments—individualism, abstraction, linear logic, and truth as correspondence. These systems only recognize valid knowledge when it fits predefined categories of Western rationality (see Mitova, 2024). Indigenous and relational ontologies—such as those in Māori thought—are often rendered unintelligible, reduced, or mistranslated, reproducing the violence of colonization (Moana, 1992). When flattened to Western categories, the potential for alternative world-making is foreclosed. Western systems of research, science, and technological design function as a Translation-entity: an abstracting force that appropriates and reformulates Indigenous knowledge into a form legible to—and manageable by—the dominant system (Mika and Stewart, 2017). This issue has already been studied, for instance, in the research by Koenecke et al. (2020) in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). The authors evaluated five commercial automatic speech recognition (ASR) systems and found that all exhibited significantly higher word error rates for African American speakers than for white speakers. On average, systems misrecognized 35% of words spoken by Black individuals, compared to only 19% for white individuals—even when saying the same words. This demonstrates how ASR systems can reproduce and amplify existing social biases, particularly when trained on datasets that fail to represent the full diversity of language use. Contemporary epistemology offers valuable resources to challenge such monolithic conceptions. Our proposal draws on virtue epistemology (VE) to address epistemic issues embedded in the design and implementation of emerging technologies like AI. VE— especially in its socially embedded, pluralistic forms—rejects the idea that knowledge is solely an individual achievement. Instead, it sees knowledge as relational and shaped by cultural, social, and ethical contexts. Through VE, we argue for a model of epistemic accountability that is responsive to the social conditions of knowledge production. By moving away from exclusionary frameworks, VE creates space for alternative worldviews, such as Māori ontologies. This opens possibilities for redesigning technologies in ways that respect and incorporate plural forms of life and understanding.

Kristy Claassen
University of Twente, Netherlands

Kristy Claassen holds degrees in Journalism and Philosophy from the University of Johannesburg and Theology from the University of Pretoria, where her master's thesis focused on Theological Anthropology and Technics. She later completed an MSc in Philosophy of Technology at the University of Twente with a dissertation on Ubuntu in the Anthropocene: Towards an African Cosmotechnics. Currently pursuing a PhD at Twente, she researches moral change, conceptual disruption, Ubuntu philosophy and Artificial Intelligence. As part of the Ethics of Socially Disruptive Technology (ESDIT) consortium, she explores how emerging technologies are reshaping the human condition.

Disruption Decentered: Toward a Framework for Intercultural Conceptual Disruption

Recent work in the philosophy of technology has drawn attention to the phenomenon of conceptual disruption: a process in which novel or emerging technologies destabilise or disrupt existing concepts, expose their insufficiency and create conceptual gaps. Conceptual disruption occurs when technological developments introduce phenomena that cannot be readily described, evaluated, or classified using existing conceptual resources. Classic examples include the concept of brain death, developed in response to the advent of mechanical ventilators, or the evolving concepts of agency and intelligence in the age of artificial intelligence. The literature in this niche field offers a useful typology of such disruptions: Conceptual gaps occur when artefacts, states, or events generated by new technologies do not fit any single familiar category. Conceptual overlap occurs when more than one concept is applicable, often leading to a classificatory dilemma. Conceptual misalignment occurs when a concept seems apt, but upon deeper inspection, it often reveals underlying value misalignment. Further accounts call into question how conceptual schemes, conceptual clusters and levels of conceptual severity contribute to conceptual disruption. While current accounts provide useful typologies for evaluating how conceptual disruption occurs, I argue that these existing frameworks fail to account for intercultural conceptual disruption (ICD), a form of disruption shaped by asymmetries in power, where dominant minority world concepts obscure or marginalise alternative conceptual schemes. To illustrate the necessity for an account of ICD, I analyse the emergence, disruption and entrenchment of the value concept of privacy in sub-Saharan Africa. I show how in the minority world, the concept of privacy belongs to a conceptual cluster that includes concepts like control and autonomy, while the African conceptions favour concepts like transparency and communal well-being.

To develop an account of ICD, I suggest three steps or movements that should accommodate current typologies of conceptual disruption: disruption, decentering and decolonisation. Firstly, intercultural disruption departs from the same point as current conceptual disruption frameworks. However, aspects such as conceptual clusters become more central in dislodging hegemonic accounts of value-concepts. I show how emerging technologies like generative AI employ conceptual clustering in their data mining and pattern recognition algorithms that further entrench dominant concepts. Secondly, ICD calls for the decentering of concepts that arise due to conceptual gaps, misalignments and overlaps. Thirdly, I argue that Kwasi Wiredu's notion of conceptual decolonisation is a valuable approach in cases where disrupted concepts have undue influence. Unlike traditional conceptual critique, ICD deals with concepts that are emergent rather than entrenched, and thus especially urgent. The aim of ICD is not to eliminate or judge intercultural conceptual frictions, but to take them seriously as sites of philosophical inquiry.

Michael Kwet
Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg

Dr Michael Kwet is a Senior Researcher of the Centre for Social Change at the University of Johannesburg and was a Visiting Fellow of the Information Society Project at Yale Law School for eight years. Dr Kwet completed his PhD at Rhodes University and has published extensively on the topic of digital colonialism and decolonization. Some of his publications include *The Cambridge Handbook of Race and Surveillance*, a booklet for the Right2Know Campaign titled "People's Tech for People's Power: A Guide to Digital Self-Defense and Empowerment", and *Digital Degrowth: Technology in the Age of Survival*, which was released last year on Pluto Press. Dr Kwet has also published in media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *Al Jazeera*, *VICE News, The Intercept, Mail & Guardian,* and *Truthdig*. He is founder of the forthcoming website, PeoplesTech.org.

Silence is Golden: US Hegemony, Digital Studies and Decolonisation

The 21st century is defined by two central developments. First and foremost, an environmental emergency, created by the over-exploitation of Nature, threatens to permanently destroy the prospect of a decent future. Second, the digital revolution, dominated by the United States through the process of digital colonialism, is seeping into all aspects of society, reinforcing American hegemony. These two developments are deeply intertwined and should be understood through the lens of digital degrowth. Unfortunately, the global intellectual community has failed to comprehend the "big picture". The field of digital studies – which includes academics, journalists, researchers, and digital justice activists – suffers from a *framework problem* that erases both degrowth and the American Empire from the picture. This is not an arbitrary failure but is a function of the hegemonic dominance of the US and European intellectual community and their adherence to American imperialism. In this presentation, I will lay out the core tenets of digital degrowth, including digital colonialism and its connection to the environmental crisis. I will then argue that digital studies are analytically and morally bankrupt in direct connection to the dominance of elite American universities, think tanks, NGOs, mainstream media outlets, and rich donors – joined by a few scattered elite institutions also funded by ultra-rich Americans. Finally, I will argue that to fix digital studies, we need to decolonise the broad intellectual system as part of a broader effort to preserve the planet against the central aggressor, the United States of America, which entails addressing economic and governance disparities within and between institutions of knowledge production and distribution.

Paige Benton
African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science

Dr Paige Benton holds a postdoctoral fellowship at the African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science (ACEPS). Her research lies at the intersection of political philosophy, political epistemology and the politics of artificial intelligence (AI). She seeks to address the evolving challenges posed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and emerging technologies, particularly their impact on the stability of democratic societies. She is a guest editor for AI & Society for the Topical Collection on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and AI. She is a research group member of the Centre for AI and Digital Policy in Washington DC. She is the Co-PI of a three-year project entitled "Safeguarding Democracy in the Age of AI," which focuses on examining how AI technologies undermine the political and epistemic agency of citizens in the Global South.

Digital Justice Requires Digital Reparations

There is an influx of literature being published on the harms digital technologies cause to individuals' agency, how they violate citizens' rights and undermine democratic systems. Despite the call for digital justice, there has been no call for digital reparations. In this paper, I argue that traditional moral, political, epistemic, and psychosocial reparations fall short of encompassing the specific digital harms and digital redress required when digital social injustices occur. To demonstrate why digital reparations are relevant and not redundant, I show that (1) some wrongs are primarily digital. (2) That digital harms require the restoration of distinct digital goods. (3) There are digital duties and responsibilities that individuals, states and Big Tech owe to rectify social injustice.

Patrick Bond
Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg

Patrick Bond, a political economist and political ecologist, teaches at the University of Johannesburg, where he is a Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre for Social Change. His PhD was earned at Johns Hopkins University under David Harvey's supervision. But his political education came from the environmental-justice, anti-apartheid, community, labour and Third World solidarity movements. His best-known book is *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa.*

The Fourth Industrial Counter-Revolution's progress in South Africa

Where there are Fourth Industrial Revolution trends, we also find South African manifestations of an extremely degenerate 4IR – as would naturally be expected in the world's most unequal society where corporations typically rank highest in PwC 'economic crime and fraud' surveys. But we also find Fourth Industrial Counter-Revolutionaries: a 4ICR that in several cases, made major gains against the corporate-centred 4IR since the early 2000s. First was the rampant application of Intellectual Property (IP) and monopoly patents that are vital to the 4IR and especially privatised AI, thereby excluding poor people from life-saving innovations, e.g. in public health services. Big Pharma corporations supplied Anti-RetroViral medications for AIDS, but at a cost of R100 000 annually (before 2004) due to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Related Intellectual Property System. The Treatment Action Campaign, their labour allies and lawyers, the Constitutional Court, courageous journalists, some senior African National Congress officials, and generic medicines firms together rejected IP barriers to medicines access and won major exemptions at the WTO in 2001, compelling roll out of free drugs to 5 million, thus raising life expectancy from 52 in 2004 to 65 by the mid-2020s. Second, in a case that undermined the 4IR's social-media mind-manipulation capacities, a bot army arranged by Bell Pottinger, the broadcaster ANN7 and the Gupta brothers had in 2016-17 declared war on targeted politicians, journalists and civil society. SA's opposition parties (especially the DA and EFF), journalists (from amaBhungane, Daily Maverick and Sunday Times) and nearly all other activists in left-wing, centrist and right-wing civil society, as well as Johann Rupert, together opposed Bell Pottinger and ANN7, resulting in their corporate death sentences, with the Guptas relegated to exile in Dubai. Third, in a case which highlights the surveillance of citizens' movements by states and capital, SA National Road Agencies Ltd (Sanral) and Kapsch established 'e-toll gantries' across Gauteng's highways to enforce payment for road use, even though apartheid and post-apartheid housing markets force working people to live far from city centres. The Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (Outa), and Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) successfully protested in the streets and courts to protect the vast majority of Gauteng road users who boycotted gantries and e-toll bill payment, closing down the e-tolling by 2023. Fourth, the ultra-commodification of everything increasingly requires advanced financial technology and so the World Bank's International Finance Corporation and CPS Net1's strategy of 'financial inclusion' entailed the raiding of millions of poor people's monthly social grants during the 2010s – so as to debit them for microfinance and other undesired services. Disgusted by revelations of abuse, Black Sash and its lawyers acted on behalf of 17 million monthly victims, initially compelling the state to make the SA Post Office the distributor of grants, resulting in CPS's corporate death sentence due to a court-imposed fine and bankruptcy in 2020. Fifth, the danger of applying geo-engineering and nanotechnology to the climate crisis – to which South Africa is the world's third worst economy measured by emissions/person/GDP unit – includes pilot-site strategies for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in agriculture, Carbon Capture and Storage (to mitigate major sources of emissions), and the dropping of iron filings into the ocean to create algae blooms, among others. In opposition, the NGO Biowatch monitors GMOs while Earthlife Africa, groundwork and progressive environmentalists oppose 'false solutions' to climate chaos, demanding instead a genuine decarbonisation, with renewable energy replacing coal and nuclear power. Sixth, blockchain and crypto-currency will distort and undermine state monetary sovereignty, and one poll (by Hootsuite, in February 2019) found 10.7% of SA internet users invest in Bitcoin and other crypto-currencies, the then highest rate in the world, nearly double the global average. But various trade unions (especially in the SA Federation of Trade Unions) have regularly advocated much stronger exchange controls, especially against the Illicit Financial Flows that are amplified by crypto-currencies. In these and several other ways, the 4IR is being met by a 4ICR, similar to the way Karl Polanyi theorized a 'double movement', of working-class forces from below, against market tendencies from above, and that Nancy Fraser has extended this concept beyond simple social protection and into a variety of social-movement struggles for emancipation. But civil society capacity to sustain a 4ICR, not as a Luddite project, but in order to continue to socialise and regulate technology (and ban it where necessary), will be impossible to build unless the fragments of this approach can be woven together into a more coherent South African left politics in coming years.

Sarah Godsell
School of Education at The University of the Witwatersrand

Sarah Godsell is a historian, an educator and a poet. She got her PhD in History in 2015 from Wits and completed a two-year post-doctoral fellowship at the CEPR at UJ in 2017. She then moved to Wits School of Education, where she teaches history content and methodology to pre-service teachers. She received an Iso Lomso fellowship at Stias in 2025, where she will complete a project about history teaching and emotion. She is also a current TAU participant, with a project about how to better align teaching methodology courses to current classroom realities

How GenAI writes about Africa: Exploring an example of GenAI narratives about African history through course content and student submissions

GenAI has the potential to damage Africa in many ways, from ecological to epistemic. This paper explores specific information and images produced by GenAI to understand the way it produces a narrative on African history and historiography that is epistemically unjust. This is framed in a first-year history content course that I opened with Binyavanga Wainaina's satirical piece "How to Write about Africa". This exposed the students to narratives that promote epistemic (and other) injustices towards the continent. The course was intended to be an introduction to history, historiography, and the students' own histories. Through the course, I noticed a type of epistemic harm produced by GenAI, both in my own exploration with it, and in my students' submissions, that, unsurprisingly, replicated what Wainaina had warned about. The stereotypes reproduced about Africa are unsurprising because of how GenAI is trained, but what is noteworthy is the way in which they are mingled with knowledge about African histories and presents, and then often unrecognised by those not already experts in a topic. This presents these narratives in a dangerous way to students, who are by definition not already experts. Students access these means of reproducing damaging knowledge about Africa, and because of the trust in and reliance on GenAI tools, they reproduce precisely the narratives warned of in Wainaina's piece. This paper is particularly interested in investigating the way GenAi flattens and stereotypes knowledges about Africa, even as it presents what on the surface appear to be relevant and cogent arguments or images. I examine this through my own exploration with the use of specific GenAI technologies during the building of this first-year social science history content course, in an attempt to explore the capabilities of the technologies. My experience suggests that while there was a capability in the technologies explored, there were both subtle and overt ways in which Africa was stereotyped, the histories were underrepresented, or subtly misrepresented, but only in ways one familiar with the histories would necessarily recognise. This made me interrogate my knowledge as a historian, how it had been honed, and what the dangers of GenAi present for future historians. I also explore the ways in which I honed the content, and what was possible with deep knowledge on a subject. I also draw some examples from student submissions for the course which again show the stereotyping and epistemic harm caused to Africa by GenAi. It is common knowledge that AI represents a global north knowledge bias. However, this paper produces an example on a learning and teaching level of what this GenAI bias looks like, and the harm it can cause, in the knowledge available to students, and the way in which students produce knowledge through GenAI.

Seydina Moussa Ndiaye
Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou Kane

Prof Seydina Moussa Ndiaye is a senior lecturer at Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou Kane (UNCHK), which he helped to set up as a member of the steering committee. He is also Director of the FORCE-N program, which aims to create 70,000 jobs in the digital sector by 2027. As regards his research activities, he is the head of the ALIVE (AI Living lab for Innovation and Viable Ethical policies and systems) multidisciplinary research group in UNCHK. At a national level, he supported the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, piloting the digital transformation of the Senegalese higher education system, notably by coordinating the acquisition of Senegal's TAOUEY supercomputer. He is also a member of several bodies, including the National Commission on Cryptology, the Digital Technology Park Project Steering Committee, the Board of Directors of SENUM SA, and he is President of the Senegalese Association for AI. Seydina has supported the Senegalese government in the conceptualization of national AI and data strategies. Seydina is an expert to the AUDA-NEPAD for the drafting of the Pan-African White Paper on AI and to the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI). He was also a member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Body on AI (dissolved in October 2024). For UNESCO, Seydina is a member of several groups: High-Level Expert Group on AI Governance at the Ecosystem Level, AI Ethics Experts Without Borders, and International Advisory Group for the development of a MOOC on Ethics of AI (project with LG AI Research) Seydina holds a PhD in computer science, with a specialization in artificial intelligence (Université Paul Sabatier), and an MBA (IAE Paris Sorbonne).

Digital Decolonisation and Global Framing

In this opening keynote, Prof Seydina Moussa Ndiaye explores how digital technologies, particularly AI, are shaped by enduring colonial power structures and global asymmetries. He challenges dominant narratives of digital inclusion and calls for a reframing rooted in epistemic justice, data sovereignty, and pluralistic governance. Drawing on global governance debates and grounded alternatives emerging from the Global South, the keynote offers pathways toward a truly decolonial digital future, where communities co-create the norms, infrastructures, and imaginaries that define our technological era.

Thabo Motshweni
Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg

Thabo Motshweni is a Sociology and Psychology scholar at the University of Johannesburg, currently pursuing a PhD under the supervision of Prof. Patrick Bond, Prof. Melanie Samson and Dr Trevor Ngwane. He completed earlier degrees in psychology (2017–2019) and Honours in Psychology (2020), Honours sociology (2021 Cum-laude) and Masters on Sociology (2022-223, Cum-laude) at the same institution and has earned recognition through several scholarships, including those from the National Research Foundation (2020,2024,2025,2026), Duke University Scholarship (2021), and the Special URC (2022). Thabo is a frequent contributor to major South African publications such as Mail & Guardian, Sowetan, and City Press. His commentary addresses topics such as: South Africa's energy policy and its environmental implications. Social justice issues, including the value and integration of informal waste pickers into the recycling economy. The impact of digital technologies on inequality, surveillance, and economic systems within the Global South. Thabo's research interests include Digital colonialism and Industry 4.0, especially in how post-colonial and decolonial theory can inform resistance to global techno-power dynamics, Social and economic inequalities rooted in urban governance, data privacy, credit systems, and the digital economy in South Africa. He has co-authored a 2024 chapter titled "Policy Imperatives for ICT in South African Higher Education" with colleagues Zahraa McDonald, Sanele Khakhu, and Ke Yu.

Artificial Intelligence and The Climate Crisis: A Critique of Techno-Optimism

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly considered an indispensable ally in addressing climate change, promising breakthroughs in renewable energy optimisation, climate modelling, conservation, and emissions tracking. Yet, such narratives often obscure the material and ecological costs embedded in AI systems' development, training, and deployment. This article offers a critical examination of the climate implications of AI, focusing on the energy-intensive processes required to train large machine learning models, the expanding footprint of data centres, and the extraction of finite resources necessary for hardware production. These processes significantly contribute to carbon emissions and intensify environmental degradation, particularly in the Global South, where extractive industries and digital infrastructures are disproportionately located. Moreover, the application of AI in climate mitigation often aligns with corporate interests that prioritise profit over genuine ecological restoration. Under the banner of "green innovation," AI technologies are deployed in ways that reinforce existing inequalities, diverting attention from the systemic drivers of the environmental crisis, such as overconsumption, extractivism, and unchecked industrial expansion. The prevailing techno-solutionist discourse suggests that technology alone can resolve complex socio-ecological problems, sidelining the need for deeper structural transformations. By situating AI within the broader context of capitalist production, racialised extraction, and ecological exploitation, this critique argues for a more cautious and politically grounded approach to AI's climate role. Instead of assuming AI's neutrality or benevolence, it is crucial to interrogate who benefits, who bears the costs, and what alternative technological futures might better align with principles of climate justice. This article ultimately calls for a reframing of AI not as a silver bullet, but as a site of contestation where choices about sustainability, equity, and accountability must be deliberately and democratically made.

Tomas Cajueiro
The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Tomás Cajueiro is a Brazilian researcher, cultural producer, and PhD in Communication and Journalism from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. His work explores the intersections between visual storytelling, digital infrastructures, and decolonial theory. As a producer, he has led numerous cultural and editorial initiatives aimed at bringing academic reflections beyond the walls of universities, fostering public dialogue on identity, territory, and the politics of representation. He has published several books and participated in exhibitions and academic events across Europe and Latin America. His current research focuses on epistemic resistance in the digital sphere, particularly through journalism collectives and visual narratives from the Global South.

Digital Coloniality and the Struggle for Epistemic Plurality: Journalism Collectives as Agents of Refusal and Reparation

If colonialism was about conquest, coloniality is about control—over knowledge, meaning, and who gets to speak or remain invisible. As Quijano and others define it, coloniality imposes a subject-position that becomes the universal norm: white, Western, modern, rational. Everyone else is measured against it. Just as colonialism operated globally through territorial conquest, coloniality extends its reach by reshaping meaning and legitimacy. Today, in the digital sphere, we witness a new form of this violence—now encoded in platforms, data, and algorithms. A new hegemonic subject emerges: the European explorer is replaced by the Silicon Valley man—a figure who embodies the illusion of technological neutrality while reproducing the same logic of epistemic erasure. Once hailed as tools of liberation, digital technologies now concentrate power in the hands of a few Northern tech giants. Algorithms are trained on biased data and optimized for profit, not truth. English dominates online spaces. Indigenous, Afro descendant, and peripheral epistemologies are again pushed aside—not by ships and flags, but by platforms, data flows, and design logics. This presentation asks: How can we resist the consolidation of a new digital matrix of colonial power—and instead seize this moment of rupture to build a truly pluriversal world? One where epistemic difference is not a threat to be erased, but a source of richness, resilience, and renewal.As the dominant Western development model falters, the suppression of non-Western epistemologies in the digital realm becomes not only an ethical failure, but a missed opportunity to imagine otherwise—to design digital futures rooted in plurality, reciprocity, and relationality. In this context, I explore how journalism collectives in Brazil—such as Mídia Indígena, Sumaúma, Farpa, and R.U.A. Foto Coletivo—resist digital coloniality not simply by producing content, but by practicing epistemic refusal and reparation. These collectives challenge platform logics and Western-centric news values by: Crafting visual and narrative strategies grounded in local cosmologies and collective memory, using digital tools to circulate non-hegemonic worldviews, even while excluded from designing those tools, and reclaiming digital space as a terrain of struggle—not just for visibility, but for epistemic legitimacy. Drawing on decolonial theory (Quijano, Mignolo, Dussel), platform critique (Couldry and Mejias, Ricaurte), and critical media studies (Treré, Milan), this talk argues that these collectives are not marginal, but agents of epistemic innovation.They remind us that digital justice begins with epistemic justice— and that decolonising the digital requires more than access. It demands the integration of plural epistemologies into its very architecture. At this global turning point, it is a critical mistake to let the digital world be built on the same foundations that brought us here. The question is not just what technologies we build—but whose knowledge gets to shape them.

PANEL DESCRIPTIONS:

GLOBAL POLICY

This panel examines the pressing need for AI policy frameworks that align with the priorities, values, and realities of the Global South. Key themes include data sovereignty, infrastructural inequality, language and cultural representation, indigenous knowledge systems, and the geopolitical implications of AI deployment. The panel will also highlight emerging policy efforts, regional cooperation, and community-driven strategies for ethical and equitable AI futures in the Global South

Prof Seydina Moussa Ndiaye	Prof Emma Ruttkamp-Bloem	Dr Roland Banya
is a senior lecturer at Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou Kane (UNCHK), which he helped to set up as a member of the steering committee. He is also Director of the FORCE-N program, which aims to create 70,000 jobs in the digital sector by 202 7. As regards his research activities, he is the head of the ALIVE (AI Living lab for Innovation and Viable Ethical policies and systems) multidisciplinary research group in UNCHK. At a national level, he supported the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, piloting the digital transformation of the Senegalese higher education system, notably by coordinating the acquisition of Senegal's TAOUEY supercomputer.	is the current Chair of UNESCO's World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) and a former member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Body on AI. She is professor and head of the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria and leads the ethics of AI research group at the Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research (CAIR) in South Africa. She was the chairperson of the Ad Hoc Expert Group that drafted the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, which was adopted by 193 Member States in 2021, and contributed to developing implementation tools for the Recommendation.	is a research fellow with Research ICT Africa. He is also a development finance specialist with demonstrated work experience in Africa. He has worked on several donor-funded projects, with a wide range of institutions including regulators, government agencies, commercial banks, payment service providers, industry associations, development finance institutions, and financial sector deepening trusts across Africa.

CENTERING GLOBAL SOUTH SCHOLARSHIP IN DECOLONIAL FUTURES

This panel examines how institutions, scholars, and policymakers in the Global North can meaningfully support and amplify the work of Global South scholars in the ongoing struggle for decolonisation. Panellists will discuss structural barriers, building equitable partnerships, supporting autonomous knowledge production, and creating platforms where Global South scholars can lead global discourses on technology and decolonisation.

Prof Tshepo Madlingozi

Tshepo Madlingozi is based at the Human Rights Commission for South Africa. He is the co-editor of the South African Journal of Human Rights and part of the management team of Pretoria University Law Press. He is a co-editor of Symbol or Substance: Socio-economic Rights in South Africa (Cambridge UP) and a co-editor of Introduction to Law and Legal Skills in South Africa, 2nd Edition (Oxford UP South Africa). He sits on the boards of the following civil society organisations amandla.mobi; Centre for Human Rights, University of Free State; the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution; and the Rural Democracy Trust. For thirteen years, he worked with and for Khulumani Support Group, a 120,000-strong social movement of victims and survivors of Apartheid.

Prof Karen Frost-Arnold

Karen Frost-Arnold is a Professor of Philosophy at Hobart & William Smith Colleges in New York and a Visiting Associate Professor at the African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science at the University of Johannesburg. Her research focuses on social epistemology, trust, feminist philosophy, and epistemology of the internet. Her book *Who Should We Be Online? A Social Epistemology for the Internet* was published by Oxford University Press in January 2023.

Dr Abraham Tobi

Abraham Tobi is a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Canada Research Chair on Epistemic Injustice and Agency and the Centre for Research in Ethics in Montreal, Canada. He is also a research associate at the ACEPS in Johannesburg, South Africa. In spring 2025, he was a DFI Visiting Fellow at Tilburg University, Netherlands. His primary research interest lies at the intersection of normative and social epistemology, focusing on epistemic injustice, oppression, and decolonisation. His research has been published in various journals like *Episteme, Social Epistemology, and Topoi*. He has also taught philosophy at both the University of Johannesburg and the University of Pretoria. In spring 2026, he will be joining the Rotman Institute of Philosophy at Western University as a Postdoctoral Fellow.