

The African Centre of Epistemology and Philosophy of Science (ACEPS) and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Johannesburg invite you to the following in-person event:

UJ PHILOSOPHY/ACEPS COLLOQUIUM

28 September 2022

11:20-12:50 (SOUTH AFRICAN STANDARD TIME/UTC+2)

VENUE: Humanities Common Room, C-Ring 3, UJ, APK

African data subjects in digital/ data colonialism.

Aisha Kadiri

(École Normale Supérieure, Paris)

Abstract

Two significant phenomena within the digital political economy are the racialization and colonization through algorithmic means. In the past years, various scholars have pointed out the many ways in which digital technology creates or perpetuates inequalities along class, gender, and disability lines. In a similar vein, analyses of digitally enabled racism have pointed towards the need for new concepts such as algorithmic harms and data justice. Equally important, a “decolonial turn” in research is making visible the logic of exploitation and domination that goes hand in hand with the digital transformation. In this context, the thesis of data colonialism is a fundamental critique of the exploitative data-driven practices set within historically developed systems of oppression. As racism and colonialism are by no means distinct phenomena but co-constitute each other, both have to be taken into account when examining algorithmic injustice. Overlapping with these concepts, the term digital colonialism often refers to the politico-economic power of big technology companies in the Global South. This presentation will take a look at how the concepts of epistemic injustice and the data subject can aid an understanding of digital/data colonialism.

Presenter Bio

Aisha Kadiri is a PhD candidate at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) in Paris and a researcher at Digital Africa. Her doctoral project on digital colonialism is under the supervision of Prof. J. Peter Burgess and part of the Chair of Geopolitics of Risk as well as the laboratory "République des Savoirs" at ENS. She holds a Bachelor of Science from Maastricht University and a Master of Science from the University of Copenhagen. Her most recent publication "Data and Afrofuturism: An emancipated subject?" explores in how far the concept of an individual, liberal data subject, who was traditionally at the centre of data protection efforts, needs to be rethought in light of digital racism and injustice. More specifically, she argues that because Afrofuturism situates the Black struggle in persistent, yet continuously changing structural disparities and power relations, it offers a powerful departure point for re-imagining data protection. Sketching an Afrofuturist data subject then centres on radical subjectivity, collectivity, and contextuality. During her stay in Johannesburg, she is visiting the "African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science".