



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

# AFRICAN STUDIES AND 4IR: IN SEARCH OF AN APPROPRIATE ANALYTICAL APPROACH

7 December 2020

## Roundtable: Call for abstracts

Which theoretical approach, methodological perspective, or set of analytical tools are suitable for framing the state of Africa's technological advancement, and could optimally equip her self-negotiation into the socio-economic and scientific transformations wrought by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)?

The University of Johannesburg's Institute for Intelligent Systems (IIS), in collaboration with the Johannesburg Institute of Advanced Study (JIAS), is hosting a research roundtable to reflect on the methodological and discursive contours within the disciplinary field of African Studies that could direct or should influence research and deliberations on the implications and impact of the (4IR) on Africa.

The roundtable shall be held online via Zoom on 7 December 2020, from 14h00-19h00 CAT.

Premised on the interdisciplinary and international format of the Research Group on Africa, Philosophy and Digital Technologies ([www.apdit.africa](http://www.apdit.africa)) as led by Prof John Lamola, cognate issues the roundtable will be seized with are:

- Modes of measurement and interpretation of technological advancement in Africa.
- Assessment of the modalities of critical discourses on the appropriation of Science and Technology in Africa, with particular focus on the advent of technologies of the 4IR.
- The navigation of the binary between technophobia and technological euphoria (and Afro-futurism) in African Human Sciences, Film and Creative Literature, Business Studies, Computer Sciences, etc.
- Science and cultural contextualization, universalism, geopolitics of knowledge production, etc.
- The feasibility of the transdisciplinarity demanded by research on the social impact of Artificial Intelligence.
- If the methodological presuppositions of current technoscience are universal and global, what is African in them?

Expressions of interest to participate in this inquiry are invited from scholars in all areas related to the theme of the roundtable. As the format of a roundtable adumbrates intense interaction among interlocutors, the number of participants shall be limited to ensure a productive outcome.

Presenters of the briefing notes selected for the roundtable will be invited to develop these into full articles that will be published in a special issue of a SCOPUS accredited Africa-based journal during 2021.

Kindly send a 500-words abstract for a 15 minutes presentation you intend to make before 8 November 2020 to [maleseal@uj.ac.za](mailto:maleseal@uj.ac.za).

Academic Technical Committee:

- Professor Emeritus Paulin Hountondji (National University of Benin)
- Prof M. John Lamola (University of Johannesburg) – Chair
- Prof Munyaradzi Mawere (Great Zimbabwe University)
- Dr Irina Turner (Bayreuth University)

*This initiative is supported by the National Research Foundation South Africa (Grant129121)*

**The Future  
Reimagined**