SACOMM 2026

Asserting the Human in the Time of Technofeudalism

9-11 September - New Commerce Building - Wits University

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG 100 1922 2022

WITS CENTRE FOR JOURNALISM

SACOMM

Welcome, acknowledgement and thanks

Dear SACOMM members, delegates and friends of the Wits Centre for Journalism,

Welcome to Wits University for the 2026 South African Communications Association conference hosted by the Wits Centre for Journalism. The programme was curated from large number of excellent submissions, and I believe it reflects critical issues in journalism, communications, media and associated areas of interest.

The local organising committee comprised Dr Collen Chambwera (Chair), Dr Dinesh Balliah, Dr Thandi Bombi, Ms Pheladi Sethusa, Ms Gillian Jones and Dr Lesley Mofokeng. I am incredibly grateful that my colleagues took on this task this year which they juggled along with their normal teaching and research schedules.

The local logistics team included Ms Lineo Letheba, Ms Tshegofatso Ngwako, Mrs Pierre Miller, Mrs Makane Phiri, Mr Tshepiso Ntombela and Mr Stuart Dickinson. It is impossible for the WCJ to do the work it does without the support of these colleagues and I remain grateful for this exceptional team.

Finally, sincere thanks to Ms Annelize Vermeulen who acted as the link between the LOC and the SACOMM executive.

CONFERENCE MATTERS

The 2026 conference takes place at the New Commerce Building at Wits University. This conference is a safe space for respectful debate and discussion. We kindly request that every person including support staff and students are treated with respect.

We have made provisions for special meals if they were requested at the time of registration. We regret that if this information was not shared with us ahead of the start of the conference, provision may not have been made for a special meal.

Emergency services will be on site during the conference to assist you should you need attention. If you fall ill or need further assistance, please reach out to a member of the logistics team.

I trust you will enjoy your time at Wits!

Dinesh Balliah, Director, Wits Centre for Journalism.

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2026

09:00–10:30 OPENING PLENARY SESSION

MAIN PLENARY – NCB 2

- *Welcome to SACOMM 2026* – **Dinesh Balliah** (Wits Centre for Journalism, Wits University)
- *Welcome by the host institution* – **Garth Stevens** (DVC: People Development and Culture, Wits University)

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Panel Discussion
Chair: Dinesh Balliah

After Technofeudalism: Information Integrity, Sovereignty, and the Algorithmic State in African Public Life

- *After Technofeudalism: Information Integrity, Sovereignty, and the Algorithmic State in African Public Life* - **Tanja Bosch** – University of Cape Town, NRF SARChI Chair in Digital Media Sociology.
  DISCUSSANTS: **Herman Wasserman, Tshepang Mohlale** and **Postdoctoral Fellows** associated with the presenting chairs

10:30–10:45 TEA BREAK

10:45–12:45 DAY 1 PARALLEL SESSION 1

ROOM 143

Communications Advocacy and Activism: Human Rights, Health and Digital Activism

Stream/Format: Communications Advocacy and Activism (CAA)/Paper Presentations
Chair: Collen Chambwera

- *Beyond the Ivory Tower: Positioning Media Scholars as Scholar-Activists in Sub-Saharan Africa:* **Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam** *(Rhodes University)*
- *Confronting the Postcolonial Condition: A Study on the Blesser–Blessee Phenomenon in South Africa:* **Thandwa Maphalala** *(Limkokwing University, Eswatini)*
- *Cultural Diversity or Civilizing Conformity? An Ethical Critique of Technofeudal Modernity through Arab-Islamic Thought in the Shadow of the 2023 Gaza Genocide:* **Fatimaezzahra Bid** (Mohammed V University)
- *Digital Health Information: Comparative Analysis of Return Results of GBV Prompts:* **T hato Serotho Koma** (University of South Africa)
- *Algorithmic Suppression, Technofeudalism, and Democracy: Addressing Health Misinformation on Facebook:* **Sandile Justice Khanyile** (University of South Africa)

ROOM 144

Strategic Communication, Platform Power and Digital Markets

Stream/Format: Strategic Communication/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Platform Power and the Political Economy of Resource Mobilization: Reconfiguring Development Agency in the Global South's Digital Order* - **Bonface Inganga** (Development & Fundraising Specialist)
- *Strategic Communication in Platform-Dominated Markets: A Techno-Feudalism Perspective on Digital Marketing Power and Data Control* - **Orisha Ferndale** (Nelson Mandela University)
- *A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the Communicative Strategies of Racially Charged Online Comical Texts* - **Anathi Gxavu** (University of the Western Cape)
- *Beyond the Algorithm: Investigating Communication Practices and Strategies to Attract Alumni Support at Durban University of Technology in a Technofeudal Age* - **Zamaqwabe (Zama) Sishi** (University of South Africa)
- *Brand Content without Creators?* - **Charmaine du Plessis** (University of South Africa)

NCB 3

Communication Review Launch - UNISA

12:45–13:45 LUNCH

13:45–15:15 DAY 1 PARALLEL SESSION 2

NCB 2

Screen Studies: Representation, Identity and Algorithmic Culture

Stream/Format: Screen Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Against Extraction: Afro-Spiritual Cinema and the Refusal of the Human as Data* - **Ncomi Nzimande** (University of Cape Town)
- *Algorithmic Resistance: A Scholarly Review of Documented Practices in Global North and Global Majority Contexts* - **Nkululeko Makhubu** (University of Cape Town, Centre for Film and Media Studies)
- *Authenticity and Relatability in the Age of AI: Audience Reactions to Winky D's AI-Created Music Videos* - **Oswelled Ureke / Agrippa Ncube** (University of Johannesburg)
- *Asserting the Human in the Portrayal of Masculinity in Reality Television Show,* **Uthando Nesthembu/Maserame Hleketani Madiope** (University of Johannesburg). Co-author: **Mthobeli Ncongo**

NCB 3

Communication Education and Curriculum Development: Universities, Assessment and Democratic Knowledge

Stream/Format: Communication Education & Curriculum Development (CECD)/Paper presentations
Chair: TBC

- *The Corporate Campus: Technofeudalism, Knowledge Inequality, and the Erosion of the University's Democratic Promise* - **Rethabile Molehe** (Vaal University of Technology

- *Validating Data Amidst Hallucinations: The Struggle for Universities with Assessments in the Age of AI* - **Alexandra Willis** (Wits University)
- *Journalism is Dead: Rethinking Media Education and Human Agency in the Age of Technofeudalism* - **Tigere Muringa** (Durban University of Technology)
- *How Generative AI Shapes Academic Writing Norms and Practices Among Students and Lecturers at Rhodes University* - **Simbulele Muleka** (Rhodes University)

ROOM 143

Diversity Studies and Media Studies: Intersections and Connections

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Padel Discussion
Chair: TBC

- *Diversity Studies and Media Studies: Intersections and Connections* - **Nicky Falkof** (Wits University)

ROOM 144

Communication Studies: Public Communication, Knowledge and Governance

Stream/Format: Communication Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *An Analysis of the Digital Communication Channels Employed by the University of Johannesburg's PsyCaD to Communicate with its Publics* - **Tsholofelo Nkoane** (University of Johannesburg)
- *Antjie Krog's Poem Cycle Lady Justice Blindfolded (2014) Read as a Possible Conceptual Framework for Negotiating with Technofeudalism* - **Maria Snyman** (North-West University)
- *Asserting the Human in Technofeudal Water Governance Through Decolonial Perspectives on Communication and Knowledge in Hammanskraal* - **Kealeboga Mokomane** (University of the Witwatersrand)
- From Extraction to Care: Afro-Relational Environmental Communication in the Age of Technofeudalism - **Dominic Ayegba Okoliko** (Stellenbosch University)

ROOM 149

Communication: Campaigns, Health Communication and Platform Accountability

Stream/Format: Strategic Communication
Chair: TBC

- *Examining X, TikTok and Facebook Discourses on Anti-Illegal Dumping Campaigns in Gauteng, South Africa* - **Charlotte Mahlangu** (UNISA). Co-author: **Mollale Ramaifo**
- *Exploring Generation Z's Use of TikTok Storytelling to Challenge HIV/AIDS Stigma in South Africa* - **Martha Themba** (University of Johannesburg). Co-authors: **Pamela Sibiya** & **Seriane Morapeli**
- *mHealth in a Technofeudal System: Implications for Rural South African Communities* - **Chinoza Masimbe** (University of Johannesburg)
- *PlatformAccountability and Peace Journalism: Strategic Communication for Ethical Tech Governance in the Global South* - **Ayobami Steven Akinola** (Nigerian Institute of International Affairs)

ROOM 150

Media Studies and Journalism: AI, Newsrooms and Platformed Visibility

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *African Language Radio and AI: Challenges and Opportunities – Indigenous Music and Educational Programmes at Ligwalagwala FM and Ikwekwezi FM* - **Thamba Mnguni** (Wits University)
- *AI Adoption in Kannada Local Newsrooms: Exploring Readiness in an Age of Techno-Feudal Media Systems* - **Tejaswini S (**St Joseph's University)
- *Artificial Intelligence and Data Journalism: Opportunities and Challenges for Contemporary Newsrooms* - **Theodora Dame Adjin-Tettey** (Durban University of Technology)
- *Artificial Intelligence Uses and its Implications for Journalism Production Processes: A Case of Power 98.7 FM in Johannesburg* - **Chaboke Malaka** (Wits University)

15:15-15:30 TEA BREAK

15:30–17:00 DAY 1 PARALLEL SESSION 3

NCB 2

Screen Studies: Gender, Spirituality and Platformed Storytelling

Stream/Format: Screen Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Exploring Gendered Algorithms and Curation: A Walkthrough of Pinterest* – **Fadiyah Rabin** (University of Cape Town)
  Grown Men with Grown Men Bullets: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Black Masculinity as Represented in Sinners (2025) - **Aman Adams** (University of Cape Town)
- *Izibazana on Screen: Reality Television and the Gendered Politics of Ulwaluko* - **Quatro Mgogo** (Rhodes University). Co-author: **Mvuzo Ponono**
- *Local Practices, Global Platforms: African Spirituality Mediated Through Western Screen Genres* – **Alex Gwaze** (University of Cape Town) and **Noluvuyo Mjoli** (University of KwaZulu-Natal).

NCB 3

Communications Advocacy and Activism: Policy Advocacy, Digital Rights and Civic Agency

Stream/Format: Communications Advocacy and Activism (CAA)/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Harvesting Distress: Technofeudalism and the Commodification of Mental Health* - **Nomandla Gumede** *(University of the Witwatersrand)*
- *Leveraging TikTok as a Platform for Cyberactivism on the Alleged Genocide in Palestine: A Case Study of South African Influencers* - **Lethinjabulo Shivambu** (Stellenbosch University)
- *Lobbying, Black Business Council and the Formalisation of Black Economic Empowerment as Government Policy in South Africa* - **Metji Makgoba** (University of Limpopo)
- *Twitter/X and Anti-Corruption Advocacy in South Africa: Asserting Agency in the Era of Technofeudalism* - **Julian Jacobs** (Rhodes University). Co-author: **Alette Schoon**

ROOM 143

Rethinking Information Integrity

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Panel Discussion
Chair: TBC

- *Rethinking Information Integrity in the Age of Manosphere* - Admire Mare (University of Johannesburg) - **Kholofelo Ngoepe**, **Khabonina Mdokwe**, **Willard Mapfumo**, **Abuyile Mkumbuzi** and **Vuelwa Zweni.**

ROOM 144

Communication Studies: Digital Culture, Identity and Social Life
Stream/Format: Communication Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Beyond Prompts and Algorithms: Interviewing Social Bots for the Social Good in African Contexts* - **Abednico Banda/Mariekie Pinto** (University of Johannesburg)
- *Growing Up on Platforms: How South African Youth Identity and Opportunity Are Shaped by Technofeudalism* - **Didintle Maphoto** (University of the Witwatersrand)
- *Let's Play "Catfish" (AI): Master-masquerade Behind Dating App Profiles* - **Andisiwe Shasha** (University of Johannesburg)
- *"My Bot and I": Simulacrum, Hyperreality and Performing Selves* - **Mariekie Pinto** (University of Johannesburg)

ROOM 149

Media Studies and Journalism: Community Media, Agency and Platform Power

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *The Post-Participatory Condition of Indigenous Community Radio at XK FM* - **Itunu Bodunrin** (University of Johannesburg)
- *Closing the Gap Between South African Community Radio and its Audiences: Exploring the Value of Audio Diaries* - **Noxolo Manyati** (Rhodes University)
- *The Nexus of Indigenous Media and Digital Innovation in Promoting Environmental Messages Among Alice Residents, South Africa* - **Foluke Bamigboye** (University of Fort Hare)

ROOM 150

Strategic Communication: Digital Platforms, Sustainability and Stakeholder Relations

Stream/Format: Strategic Communication/Paper Presentation
Chair: TBC

- *Market Penetration Through Social Media Marketing: A Human-Centred Strategy for South African Apparel SMMEs* - **Mandikandaba Gumede** (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
- *Controlled Voices: Technofeudalism and the Reshaping of Strategic Communication Among Youth in the Global South* - **Eugine Juma** (Kenyatta University)
- *The Strategic Role of Digital Communication in Advancing Sustainability in South African SMMEs* - **Regaogetswe Mashigo** (North-West University). Co-author: **Anna Oksiutycz-Munyawiri**

- *The Use of Digital Communication Technologies to Build Organisation–Stakeholder Relationships: Chemical Manufacturing SMMEs in South Africa* - **Francis Zuze** (University of Johannesburg)

END OF DAY 1

DAY 2: THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2026

9:00–10:30 DAY 2 PARALLEL SESSION 1

NCB 2

Communication Studies: Intercultural Communication, Community Media and Cultural Identity

StreamFormat: Communication Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- **09:00** - *Beyond Borders: Intercultural Communication, Afrophobic and Decolonising Cross-cultural African Marriages in South Africa* - **Ntsentselelo Delvah Nukeri** (University of Limpopo). Co-author: **Toks Oyedemi**
- **09:20** - *Women's Engagement in Community Radio Dialogues on Maternal Mortality in Rural Tanzania* - **Dianus Ishengoma** and **Given Mutinta** (Nelson Mandela University)
- **09:40** - *Narrativising Zuluness* - **Mafa Sikhafungana** (University of South Africa)
- **10:00** - *Cultural Untranslatability and the Right to Opacity in Technofeudal Media Systems* - **Nkosilesisa Kwanele Ncube** (University of Johannesburg)

NCB 3

Communication Advocacy: Technofeudalism, Power and Democracy

StreamFormat: Communication Advocacy/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Techno-Feudalism as Accumulation: A Marxist Perspective on Digital Capitalism in South Africa* - **Thapelo Magomarela** (University of South Africa)
- *Reclaiming the Human: Digital Rights Advocacy and AI Governance in Africa's Emerging Technofeudal Order* - **Bonface Inganga** (Aga Khan University)
- *The Advent of Technofeudalism: Challenges to Democracy, Equity, and Digital Sovereignty* - **Xola Tsewu** (University of South Africa)
- *Exponential Gain, but What of the Workers?* - **Max Milella** (University of the Witwatersrand) Co-author: **Karabo Mohapeloa**

ROOM 143

Communication Studies: Gender, Migration and Digital Publics

Stream/Format: Communication Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Defocusing Women (?): Centring Men in Gender-based Violence Campaigns in South Africa* - **Glardio**

Ralepelle (University of Limpopo). Co-author: **Toks Oyedemi**

- *The Self-Representation of South African Autistic Gen Zs on TikTok* - **Sakhe Alulutho Bontsa** (University of Johannesburg).
- *Disinformation and Online Crime: Delusive Speech as a New Arena for Communication and Media Studies Research* - **Julie Reid** (University of South Africa) **10:00** - *What Happened to Humans Writing for Humans? The Problem with Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Zimbabwean Journalism Practice* - **Khanyile Joseph Mlotshwa** (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

ROOM 144

Communication Studies: African Knowledge, Digital Culture and Identity

StreamFormat: Communication Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Embodied Orality and Cognitive Pragmatics in African Folklore: From Oral Tradition to Algorithmic Representation in Digital Media* - **Kwanzaa Tjemolane** (University of the Western Cape)
- *Exploring the Human Well-being and Agency in Algorithm-shaped Communication Spaces* - **Coceka Mva-Ntsepe** (Walter Sisulu University)
- *Performing" Patriotic Journalism in Algorithmic Publics: ZANU-PF and Instagram Politics in Zimbabwe* - **Mbongeni J. Msimanga** (University of Johannesburg). Co-author: **Mphathisi Ndlovu**

ROOM 149

Media Studies and Journalism: Platforming Journalism and News Futures

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Panel Discussion
Chair: TBC

- *The Rent is Due: Platforming the News and the Journalist of Tomorrow* - **Pheladi Sethusa** (Wits Centre for Journalism, University of the Witwatersrand)

ROOM 150

Communication Studies: Methodology, Artificial Intelligence and Media Representation

Stream/Format: Communication Studies/Paper Presentation
Chair: TBC

- *F*ck Methodology* - **Tumi Mampane** (University of the Free State). Co-author: **Thoko Mampane**
- *Generative AI and Techno-feudalisms in Animation: A Case of Adobe Firefly* - **Phumelele Dlamini** (University of the Witwatersrand). Co-authors: **Oluwarotimi Randle; Rene Smith**
- *The Illusion of Reality: Publicly Generated AI Images, Misinformation, and the Reassertion of the Human in Digital Media* - **Kealeboga Aiseng** (University of the Witwatersrand)
- *Disinformation Beat: An Action Research Study at the Lesotho National Broadcasting Service to Understand and Combat Disinformation* - **Mabatho Lithebe** (Rhodes University)

10:30-10:45 TEA BREAK

10:45–12:15 DAY 2 PARALLEL SESSION 2

NCB 2

Screen Studies: Gaming Platforms, Ludification and Digital Play

Stream/Format: Screen Studies/Panel Discussion
Chair: TBC

- *DiGRA South Africa: Gaming Platforms, Ludification and the Human* - **DiGRA South Africa** (Digital Games Research Association – South Africa)

NCB 3

Media Studies and Journalism: Digital Inequality, Political Communication and AI Research

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *"Social Media, Technofeudalism, and Political Discourse: A Systematic Review of Digital Inequality in South Africa"* - **Tigere Muringa** (Durban University of Technology)
- *The Role of Online Disinformation in Supporting SLAPP Lawsuits in South Africa* - **Daniel Roodt** (Stellenbosch University)
- *Affluence and Effluent: An Analysis of the Framing of Wastewater and Sewage Issues in South African News Media Between High- and Low-income Communities in Cape Town* - **Matthew John Jordaan** (Digital Media Sociology Lab, CFMS, University of Cape Town)

ROOM 143

Media Studies and Journalism: AI, Social Media Platforms and Digital Content Creation

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Reimagining the Financial Journalist as Shadow Accountant in an Age of Automation* - **Gillian Jones** (Wits Centre for Journalism, Wits University).
- *Algorithmic Intimacies: Platform Logics and the Reshaping of Information Spread on Social Media* - **Karyn Foya** (University of the Witwatersrand)
- *Performing Survival on TikTok: Hustle Culture and Technofeudalism in South Africa* - **Ontiretse Motingwa** (University of South Africa)

- **11:45** -*Podcasting, Platform Power, and the Illusion of Independence: A Technofeudal Analysis of Podcast and Chill with MacG* - **Gofaone Motsamai** (North-West University). Co-author: **Lethabo Ngoasheng**

ROOM 144

Communication Studies: Health Communication, Community Media and Public Engagement

Stream/Format: Communication Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Laughter and the Best Medicine: A Comparative Study of Informal Health Communication Practice on*

Facebook in Zimbabwe – The Case of Dr Mangombe and Dr Mischeck Ruwende - **Emmanuel Tembo** (University of Cape Town)

- Leveraging African Language Radio for Public Health Education in South Africa: A Case Study of Umhlobo Wenene FM - **Kevin Onyenankeya** (University of Fort Hare). Co-author: **Princess Motsamai**
- *Exploring "community" in the digital space: human-centred philosophies as an antidote to Technofeudalism* - **Thandi Bombi** (Wits Centre for Journalism, Wits University)

ROOM 149

Strategic Communication: Digital Governance, Stakeholder Engagement and Health Communication

Stream/Format: Strategic Communication/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *From Homo Economicus to Homo Platformicus: Reimagining Human Agency in the Global South under Technofeudalism* - **Collen Chambwera** (Wits Centre for Journalism, Wits University)
- Towards an Inclusive E-Participation in Local Government: A Digital Social Innovation Perspective - **Elmon Motloutsi** (University of South Africa)
- *The Foot and Mouth Disease National Crisis in South Africa* - **Janina Wozniak** (Nelson Mandela University)
- Reframing Indigenous Knowledge: Strategic Health Communication and African Traditional *Medicine on South African TikTok's Anciently Rooted Page* - **Aniekie Motloutsi** (University of Zululand)

ROOM 150

Media Studies and Journalism: Artificial Intelligence, Journalism Practice and Professional Futures

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *The enshittification of the newspaper – how the newspaper has cannibalized its own value* - **Dinesh Balliah** (Wits Centre for Journalism, University of the Witwatersrand)
- *Asserting the Human in Technofeudalism: Ethical Perspectives from Zimbabwe* - **Oswell Moyo** (Rwanda TVET Board – Nyanza Technical Secondary School)
- *Asserting the Human in the African Manosphere: Lessons on Domesticating Podcast Creation in Africa* - **Mthobeli Ngcongo** (University of Johannesburg)
- *Re-centring the Human in Journalism Education: Experiential Learning in a Community Newsroom Classroom* - **Phila-Nathi Mapisa** (Rhodes University)

12:15–13:15 DAY 2 LUNCH

13:15–14:45 DAY 2 PARALLEL SESSION 3

NCB 2

Communication Studies: Political Communication, Health Equity and Digital Citizenship

Stream/Format: Communication Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Muted in the Mother Tongue: Technofeudalism and the Unequal Virality of Shona and Ndebele Health Campaigns in Zimbabwe* - **Buhlebenkosi Nkomo** (NUST). Co-author: **Vimbai Chimuti**
- *Profits vs Health Accessibility: A Case of Discovery Health* - **Dimpho Mogano** (University of South Africa). **Co-author: Sabihah Moola**
- *Re-centering Care Ethics in Media Framing of Mental Illnesses within a Technofeudal Landscape* - **Florence de Vries** (Stellenbosch University)

NCB 3

Communication Studies: Community Participation, Information Access and Human Agency

Stream/Format: Communication Studies/Paper presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Re-imagining Communities and Access to Information: Human-centred Pathways for the Global South in a Technofeudal Era* - **Lufuno Charity** (Independent Researcher)
- *Re-imagining Participatory Community Radio Through Digitally Facilitated Participation for Youth Empowerment in a Technofeudal Communication Environment* - **Mphumudzeni Siphuma** (North-West University)
- *Confronting Techno-feudalism in Africa: A Policy Perspective* - **Stanley Tsarwe** (University of Namibia) Co-authors: **Phillip Santos** and J**ordaania Kondjeni Andima**

ROOM 143

Media Studies and Journalism: Journalism Innovation, Platform Power and Digital Storytelling

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Circulation Without Control: Digital Storytelling and the Reconfiguration of Community Knowledge in Zimbabwe* - **Mike Mutale** (Zimbabwe Open University)
- *Collaborators or Competitors? An Analysis of the Emerging Relationship Between Journalists and Content Creators in the South African News-making Ecosystem* - **Thato Phala** (University of Johannesburg). Co-author: **Admire Mare**
- *Creating Content or Performing Data: How Social Media Platform Algorithms Reshape Self-expression* - **Alex Gwaze** (University of Cape Town)
- *Creating Soundscapes to Evoke Decolonial and Intersectional Sensory Embodied Environmental Knowledge in a Personal Documentary Film* - **Andrea Cole** (Rhodes University)

ROOM 144

Communication Studies: Gender Justice, Environmental Communication and Digital Society

Stream/Format: Communication Studies/Paper presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Recalibrating GBV Advocacy in the Age of Technofeudalism: Ubuntu-grounded Design Alternatives for South Africa* - **Tshimangadzo Muleya** (University of South Africa)
- *Technofeudal Media Ecologies and the Mediation of Ecological Knowledge in News Reporting and Documentary Forms: An Eco-theological Inquiry from the Global South* - **Zinzile Mdlulwa** (University of South Africa)
- *The Glamorisation of Female-to-male Sexual Molestation Against Middle Adolescents in the South African Soap Opera Uzalo* - **Letacia Sekanka** (University of South Africa)
- *The Impact of Digital on Interpersonal Communication: An Exploratory Case Study of the Influence of Digital Communication on Interpersonal Human Communication Among Millennials Residing in Johannesburg, South Africa* - **Lindsay Fisher** (University of Johannesburg)

ROOM 149

Media Studies and Journalism: Cultural Criticism, Platform Visibility and Heritage

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Criticism as Infrastructure: Resisting Technofeudalism in African Cultural Production* - **Samson Jikeme** (Afrocritik)
- *Curated Visibility and Contested Publics: A Case Study of TikTok and News Access in South Africa* - **Lethabo Ngoasheng** (North-West University). Co-author: **Gofaone Motsamai**
- *Cyberbullying During the Broadcasting of Reality TV Shows in South Africa: A Big Brother Titans Case Study* - **Nothando Yolanda Tshuma** (University of the Witwatersrand). Co-author: **Kealeboga Aiseng**
- *Reclaiming the Creative Soul: Decolonial Heritage Preservation as Counter-Technofeudal Praxis in the Global South* - ***Sibusiso Mnyanda*** *(University of Cape Town). Co-author:* ***Itani Thalefi***

ROOM 150

Media Studies and Journalism: Democratic Participation, Digital Design and Civic Communication

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Democracy for Sale? Paywalls, Participation and Reintegrative Sustainability in Southern African Journalism* - **Soligah Solomons** (University of Cape Town)
- *The Analyst-for-Hire: Expert Opinion, Manufactured Credibility, and the Capture of Media Discourse* - **Dineo Rasekhula** (University of South Africa)
- *Digital Divides in Civic Communication: Comparing WhatsApp and Facebook Networks in Makhanda's Water and Sewage Crisis* - **Kamvaletu Booi** (Rhodes University)
- *Sacred Places and Mediated Religious Tourism in Zimbabwe: The Flamboyant Venues of Three Pentecostal Prophets* - **Priscilla Boshoff** (Rhodes University) Co-author: **Joseph Munyagata**

14:45–15:00 TEA BREAK

15:00–16:30 DAY 2 PARALLEL SESSION 4

NCB 2

Media Studies and Journalism: Digital Sovereignty, Platform Governance and Community Media

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Digital Occultism: Analysing #Ukuthwala in Dr Maweni's TikTok Content* - **Cebisa Khwebulana** (University of Zululand)
- *Digital Sovereignty vs. Data Colonialism: Asserting Human Agency in the Global South's Technofeudal Landscape* - **Fares Chacha** (Sétif 02 University)
- *Digital Water Governance in Africa: A Case Study of the City of Johannesburg* - **Gwinyai Regis Taruvinga** (University of the Witwatersrand)
- *Surviving Platform Dominance: Community Newspapers and the Struggle Against Technofeudalism in South Africa* - **Odidi Matai-Sigudla** (Rhodes University)

NCB 3

Media Studies and Journalism: Documentary Practice, Digital Inclusion and Global Journalism

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- Enemy Image: The 2025 India–Pakistan Conflict in Indian Mainstream Newspapers - **Tanvir Ahmed** (Jagannath University)
- *Technofeudalism and Journalism in the Global South: "A Rwandan Perspective"* - **Alphonse Munyankindi** Impinga.rw)
- *Investigating the Precarity of Freelance Journalism in the Technofeudal Economy in Lagos State, Nigeria* - **Chigozie Jude Igbozuruike** (Federal Polytechnic Nekede Owerri)

ROOM 143

Media Studies and Journalism: Public Communication, News Literacy and Social Change

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Exploring the Role of Audio Dramas in Shaping Discourses for Social Change in a Public Sphere* - **Amahle Shosha** (Rhodes University)
- *Financial Journalism and Youth: Exploring the Level of Financial News Literacy Among Young South Africans* - **Sally Sithole** (University of Johannesburg)
- *From Comments to Collective Action: How Comments on Social Media Lead to Xenophobia and Vigilantism in South Africa's Operation Dudula on eNCA's YouTube News Channel* - **Venancia Maka Chamboko** (Nelson Mandela University)
- *The Human Condition in Technofeudal Media Ecologies: Representation, Mediation and Epistemic Reconfiguration in Journalism and Documentary Forms* - **Zinzile Mdlulwa** (University of South Africa)

ROOM 144

Media Studies and Journalism: Journalism Sustainability, Platform Credibility and Newswork

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/ Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *From Licence Fees to Platform Levies: Reimagining SABC Funding Models for Institutional Viability in a*

Technofeudal Global South - **Peter Thabo Ramogale** (University of Limpopo) Co-author: **W. Juniper**

- *From Newsroom to Newsfeed: Credibility Among South African Influencer Journalists on TikTok* - **Khanyisa Dumke** (University of the Western Cape)
- *Gender-Based Harassment of Women Journalists in Mali: Digital Platforms and the Production of Social Disqualification* - **Aïssata Tindé** (Bamako-Matin)
- *The Rent of Visibility: How Platform Capitalism Shapes Humanitarian Storytelling in Post-Conflict Somalia* - **Mohamed Abdi Mohamed** (Radio Ergo)

ROOM 149

Media Studies and Journalism: Artificial Intelligence, Creator Economies and Digital Labour

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Is Innovation on AI Leading the South African Newsroom?* - **Glenda Daniels** (Wits University)
- *How Techno-Affective Networks Lead to IRL Agency* - **Darsha Indrajith** (University of Cape Town)
- *Inclusion as Extraction: Adverse Digital Incorporation and Podcast Monetisation in the South African Creator Economy* - **Hendrik Baird** (University of Pretoria)
- *Ghosting the Machine: Recapturing Literacy Through Non-Deterministic Texts* - **Joshua Ward** (Wits University)

ROOM 150

Media Studies and Journalism: Language, Journalism and Platformed Cultural Production

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *The Sovereign Intellectual: Refusing to Pay Rent on TikTok* - **Tendai Owen Chikara** (Midlands State University)
- *Journalism, Drug Use, and the New Digital Lords: Redefining Information Access in the Technofeudal Commons* - **Khutso Mabokela** (University of Limpopo)
- *Language as Being in the Age of Technofeudalism: Re-membering the Human from the Global South* - **Malebogo Kgalemang** (University of Botswana)
- *Laughing Under the Algorithm: An Analysis of Zimbabwe's Skit Industry in the Age of Technofeudalism* - **Willard Mapfumo** (University of Johannesburg)

END OF DAY 2

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10 SEPT 18:30-20:30 SACOMM GALA DINNER

DAY 3: 11 SEPTEMBER 2026

08:30–10:30 DAY 3 PARALLEL SESSION 1

NCB 2

Media Studies and Journalism: Communication, Crisis Readiness and Independent Journalism

Stream/Format Media Studies and Journalism/ Paper Presentation
Chair: TBC

- *Lies, Subterfuge and Deceit: An Exploration into the Deep Roots of a Highly Prevalent and Highly Resistant Form of Human Communication* - **Anthea Garman** (Rhodes University School of Journalism and Media Studies)
- *Love in the Time of Spiritual Warfare* - **Benevolence Mazhinji** (Rhodes University)
- *Mapping Independent Journalism: A Content Analysis of Academic Discourse in African Scholarship* - **Musawenkosi Ndlovu** (University of Cape Town). Co-author: **Sisanda Nkoala**

NCB 3

Media Studies and Journalism: Financial Journalism, Peace Communication and Digital Religion

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Always-on vs Digital Detox: Investigating digital inequality through the lives experience of South African remote workers* - **Zoliswa Mdawini** (Rhodes University)
- *Mediating Peace: Community Radio as a Tool for Dialogue During Conflict* - **Sanele Gamede** (University of Johannesburg). Co-author: **Sarah Chiumbu**
- *Performing Faith Online: Christian YouTube, Sexuality and Community in Technofeudal Systems* - **Ntsako Hlahleni (**University of the Witwatersrand)
- *Sustainable Multilingual Practices for South African Community Media: The case of Rhodes Music Radio and Grocott's Mail* - **Asithandile Mayongo** (Rhodes University)

ROOM 143

Media Studies and Journalism: Political Communication, Platform Governance and Public Service Media

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Permanent Campaign Logic and Digital Political Communication: A Case Study of Helen Zille's Online Engagement* - **Ofentse Ngake** (North-West University). **Co-author: Othusitse Maunatlala**
- *Platform Governance and the Muzzling of Female Journalists in Selected Zimbabwean Newsrooms*
- *in the Age of Technofeudalism* - **Itai Zviyita** (Triumphant College, Namibia)
- *Platform Partnerships and News Monetisation in South Africa: A Technofeudal Analysis of Publishers–Platform Relations* - **Admire Masuku and Admire Mare** (University of Johannesburg)
- *Platformization and the Realization of the Ideal Speech Situation in Public Service Media* - **Lefa Afrika** (University of Cape Town)

ROOM 144

Media Studies and Journalism: Populism, Identity and Mental Health in Digital Society

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Populist Discourse across the South African Political Spectrum: Asserting the Human on X in a Technofeudal Media Order* - **Nicola Davies-Laubscher** (University of Cape Town)
- *Radical Responsibility or Radical Harm? Performances of Race, Class and White Femininity in South African Birthkeeping Online* - **Maya Loon and Mehita Iqani** (University of the Witwatersrand/Stellenbosch University)
- *Monetising Misery: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Platform Mental Health Policies* - **Nomandla Gumede** (University of the Witwatersrand)

ROOM 149

Media Studies and Journalism: Information Access, Media Literacy and Democratic Participation

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Re-imagining Communities and Access to Information in a Technofeudal System* - **Colbert Mokalapa** (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
- *Public Value of Data and Information in an AI Era* - **Ashraf Patel** (Institute for Global Dialogue)
- *How Media Became "Data" and How We Can Take It Back* - **Marion Walton** (University of Cape Town). **Co-author: Alette Schoon** (Rhodes)
- *Reclaiming the Chat: Asserting Human Agency through AI-Powered Misinformation Literacy in South Africa* - **Elizma Nolte** (Stellenbosch University)

ROOM 150

Media Studies and Journalism: Environmental Justice, Cultural Narratives and Platform Power
Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Reconceptualising Practical Pathways for Environmental Justice in the Majority World* - **Matthew John Jordaan** (Digital Media Sociology Lab, CFMS, University of Cape Town)
- *Redshift: Reimagining Black Educational Narratives in Post-Apartheid South Africa* - **Kopano Tladi** (Nelson Mandela University). **Co-author: Janina Wozniak** (Nelson Mandela University)
- *Rethinking Humanity and Socio-Cultural Dynamics in the Ethiopian Technofeudal Context: Navigating Digital-Driven Economies from a Global South Perspective* - **Dessalegn Yeshambel Wassie** (Debre Markos University)
- *Technofeudal Futures and Feminised Careers: How Campus Radio in Limpopo, South Africa Frames Women's Work and Aspiration in a Data-driven Labour Market* - **Poseletso Malatji** (University of Limpopo) **Co-author: W. Juniper**

10:30-10:45 TEA BREAK

10:45–12:15 DAY 3 PARALLEL SESSION 2

NCB 2

Communication Education and Curriculum Development: AI, Knowledge and Human-Centred Education

Stream/Format: Communication Education and Curriculum Development (CECD)/Paper presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Educommunication and Critical Diversity Literacy: Bridges for Decolonising Praxis from a Global South Calling* - **Paola Diniz Prandini** (Wits Centre for Diversity Studies, University of the Witwatersrand)
- *Teaching at the Margins of the Machine: Reimagining Mass Communication Curriculum in Northeast India Under Technofeudal Conditions* - **Prem Taba** (Arunachal Pradesh University, Pasighat, India)
- *Asserting the Human in Higher Education: Relational and Trauma-Informed Instructional Communication in the Global South* - **Clement Selepe** (University of the Free State)
- *Beyond Technical Skills: Reclaiming the Human in Media Education* - **Lusani Netshitomboni** (University of South Africa)

NCB 3

Media Studies and Journalism: Disinformation, Newswork and Human-Centred Journalism

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *The Human Cost of Disinformation in the Global South: Lessons from X (formerly Twitter)* - **Willard Mapfumo** (University of Johannesburg)
- *The Emotional Deficit: Reclaiming Human-Centric Storytelling in Journalism Against Technofeudal Constraints* - **David Ombat** (Kenyatta University)
- *When Disaster Strikes: An Exploration of Mainstream Media Representation of Rural Communities* - **Kholofelo Ngoepe** (University of Johannesburg)

ROOM 143

Communication Studies and Screen Studies: AI, Platforms and Human Communication

Stream/Format: Communication Studies/Screen Studies/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *Hybrid Ecologies of Power: AI, Data Centres, and African Futures Beyond Technological Binaries* **- Iginio Gagliardone** (University of the Witwatersrand) **Co-author: Gwinyai Taruvinga**
- *Love Under Lease: Platform Governance, Emotional Labour, and the Rentier Logic of Moja Love* - **Mabogoshi Matlala** (Emeris & University of the Witwatersrand)
- *Reclaiming the Human in Africa's AI Future: Policy Advocacy and Digital Rights in an Emerging Technofeudal Order* - **Muthuri Kathure** (BBC Media Action)
- Emotional Framing and AI-Human Communication: Using Social Bots for Social Movements - **Abednico Banda** (University of Johannesburg)

ROOM 144

Media Studies and Journalism: Political Communication, Social Media and Public Discourse

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentation

Chair: TBC

- *World Tension Between Neighbouring Countries* - **Rakole Kgothatso Peter** (University of Limpopo)
- *What Not to Say or Do on Social Media - Content Creation and Media Ethics* - **Madumetja Jayson Ledwaba** (University of South Africa) **Co-author: Mollale Innocensia Rammaifo**
- *The Framing of #EnergyDemocracy: Whose Problem Is It Anyway?* - **Aman Adams** (University of Cape Town) **Co-authors: Matthew John Jordaan; Ethan Mlambo; Lilatha Shiba**
- *Discussion*

ROOM 149

Media Studies and Journalism: Journalism Education, Well-being and Human Agency

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *South African Journalists' Mental Well-being in a Platformised Media Environment: A Job Demands–Resources Model Analysis* - **Tony Tendai Manyangadze** (Rhodes University) **Co-author: Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam**
- *Re-centering the Human: Digital Masculinities, Mental Health and Platform Power in South Africa* - ***Ephreeda Banda*** *(Rhodes University)* **Co-author: Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam**
- *Discussion*

ROOM 150

Media Studies and Journalism: Digital Publics, Participation and Platform Power

Stream/Format: Media Studies and Journalism/Paper Presentations
Chair: TBC

- *South African Social Media Bloggers as Informal Media Actors: Freedom of Expression and Social Responsibility* - **Amelia Malebane-Leroke** (Rhodes University)
- *Tagging Big Daddy: White South Africans and Elon Musk on X* - **Nicky Falkof** (University of the Witwatersrand)
- *Resisting the Data Landlord: Civil Society Responses to Algorithmic Power in Kenya's Platform Economy* - **Grace Itumbiri** (University of Cape Town)
- *Discussion*

12:15–13:15 SACOMM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The SACOMM Annual General Meeting will be held immediately after the conclusion of Parallel Session 2. No parallel academic sessions will run during this period. All SACOMM members are encouraged to attend.

END OF DAY 3

DAY 4

Digimethods workshop for registered participants
9am – 5pm, 12th Floor, Wits Centre for Journalism

About the Wits Centre for Journalism

The Wits Centre for Journalism, situated at Wits University in Johannesburg, South Africa, is a hub of journalism-focused activity. For more than twenty years, the Centre has successfully merged journalism practice with education and training, significantly contributing to the media industry's growth, scholarly research, professional journalism initiatives, and the development of journalists across Africa.

The WCJ's public-facing projects are designed to enrich journalism within local communities. Central to all of the Centre's efforts is the conviction that journalism plays a vital role in the ongoing advancement of democracy and its fundamental principles.

The WCJ boasts an internationally recognised postgraduate programme in journalism and media studies with many students starting at the honours level and exiting at the PhD level. The academic team of the Centre is complemented by journalism professionals who facilitate the WCJ's professional development programme.

PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

The Centre's efforts are bolstered by several external funders who align with the values of the WCJ. The WCJ takes pride in collaborating with funders who recognize the importance of maintaining editorial independence and protecting it from external influence. The WCJ boasts partnerships with local and international newsrooms who sponsor students and offer internships to them after graduation.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

The WCJ features a vibrant community newsroom, an ICASA-licensed community radio station, a podcast studio, and a multimedia store. These facilities provide students with access to industry-relevant resources, equipping them for the professional world.

Through partnerships with newsrooms and media startups, students have the opportunity to create a robust portfolio before graduation while networking with top professionals as they prepare for their careers.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

The WCJ places a particular emphasis on bolstering the practice of impactful, high-quality investigative journalism across the continent and is home to:

- The African Investigative Journalism Network (AIJN)
- The African Investigative Journalism Conference (AIJC)
- The Taco Kuiper Awards for Investigative Journalism in South Africa
- The African Investigative Journalist of the Year awards
- A curriculum which emphasises the skills, tools and techniques needed for a quality investigative journalism