

Digital and AI Governance at a Time of Geopolitical Upheaval

Leiden University College The Hague, The Netherlands

Workshop | 15-16 October 2026

Thursday 15th October *(LUC Auditorium)*

14.30-15.00	Registration and coffee
15.00-15.30	Introduction + Icebreaker
15.30-17.00	Panel 1 - <i>Visions</i>
17.00 -17.30	Coffee Break
17.30-19.00	Panel 2 - <i>Narratives</i>
19.00-20.30	<i>LUC Community Kitchen Dinner</i>

Friday 16th October *(LUC Auditorium)*

09.00-09.30	Registration and coffee
09.30-11.00	Panel 3 - <i>Materiality</i>
11.00-12.00	Keynote by Payal Arora (Professor and Chair in Inclusive AI Cultures at Utrecht University and Founder of the Inclusive AI Lab)
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-14.50	Panel 4 - <i>Sovereignty</i>
14.50-15.15	Coffee Break
15.15-16.45	Panel 5 - <i>Security</i>
16.45-17.00	<i>Closing Remarks (followed by informal drinks)</i>

Thursday 15th October **(LUC Auditorium)**

Panel 1: Visions

Discussant: **Julia Krämer** (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

- ‘Composting the Cloud: Latin American Agroecological Networks and Alternative Geopolitical Visions of AI Governance’
Isabella Leonel Ferreira Sraiva (Federal University of Latin American Integration) [online]
- ‘Beyond Consent: African Communitarian Ethics and the Geopolitics of AI Governance’
Oluchi Maduka (University of Ibadan) [online]
- ‘Reclaiming AI Governance from the Margins: Human Rights, Digital Sovereignty, and African Agency in a Fragmenting Geopolitical Order’
Muthuri Kathure (BBC Media Action) [online]
- ‘Cloud-to-Battlefield: Private Connectivity, AI-Enabled Warfare, and the Governance Gaps Exposed by the War in Ukraine’
Tuğçe Uraler & Oğuzhan Manioğlu (Istanbul Kent University)

Panel 2: Narratives

Discussant: **Densua Mumford** (Leiden University)

- ‘Decolonizing Digital Governance: AI, Geopolitics, and the Digitization of African Conflict Histories’
Precious Joan Wapukha (Kibarii University)
- ‘Producing Digital Victimhood: Hierarchies of Sexual Violence in American and European Debates about Generative AI’
David Eichert (Oxford University)
- ‘Narrating Algorithmic Power: African Speculative Fiction and the Geopolitics of AI Governance’
Abayomi Awelewa (University of Lagos)
- ‘Who Speaks for AI? Data Labour, Epistemic Injustice and the Missing Voices of Global AI Governance’
Sana Rahim (Sheffield Hallam University)

Friday 16th October **(LUC Auditorium)**

Panel 3: Materiality

Discussant: Barrie Sander (Leiden University)

- 'The Double Bind of the Periphery: Brazil's Rare Earths in Digital/AI Governance'
Douglas Carvalho Ribeiro & Rodrigo Ardisson de Souza (University of Hamburg & Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas) [online]
- 'Territories of Computation: International Law, AI Infrastructure, and Geopolitical Power Across Land, Sea, and Space'
Feja Lesniewska (University of Surrey)
- 'Geopolitics of AI and Digital Value Chains: Extraction, Labour, and E-Waste in Africa's Digital Economies'
Thompson Gyedu Kwarkye (University of Galway)
- 'Eyes on the Prize: Tangible Digital Sovereignty and the EU Critical Raw Materials Act'
Victor Henriquez Diaz (Dublin City University)

Keynote



Payal Arora is a Professor at Utrecht University and Founder of the Inclusive AI Lab, challenging one of the biggest blind spots in deep tech today: most innovation is being built for the few, while the next billion users are elsewhere. A digital anthropologist, she uncovers how majority of the world are already hacking, reshaping, and scaling technology in ways stakeholders routinely overlook. Award winning author of "The Next Billion Users" (Harvard) and "From Pessimism to Promise" (MIT), she reframes risk as missed opportunity-and inclusion as common sense and the only sustainable pathway in building our tech futures. Forbes named her the 'next billion champion' and the 'right kind of person to reform tech.' Named among the 100 Brilliant Women in AI Ethics (2025), and 2025 Women in AI Benelux Award winner on Diversifying AI, her insights have shaped global institutions including UNHCR, Google, Adobe, and KPMG. Across 350+ talks in 85

countries including TEDx talks, she pushes leaders to rethink where value is created-and who gets to define the future of AI. 250+ international media outlets have covered her work including the Financial Times, Wired, and The Economist. She is a Harvard University, Columbia University, and Rockefeller Bellagio Resident Fellow alumni, and currently lives in Amsterdam.

Panel 4: Sovereignty

Discussant: Alberto Quintavalla (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

- 'Human Rights as Geopolitical Vocabulary: Digital Sovereignty and the Erosion of Rights as Constraint'
Sanjana Shikhar (London School of Economics and Political Science) [online]
- 'The Bureaucratic Route: Digital Sovereignty in Brazil and South Africa'
Sebastian Lehuede (King's College London) & **Junhan (Tim) Yang** (Fudan University) [online]
- 'From Open Science to Data Security: The Securitisation of Scientific Data in Global AI Governance'
Yuhang Wu (University of Groningen)
- 'Decolonising AI Governance in a Fracturing World Order: Data Sovereignty as Environmental Sovereignty'
Ruhi Khan (London School of Economics and Political Science)
- 'Sovereignty at a Price: Three AI Sovereignties and Their Tradeoffs'
Haakon Huynh (Columbia University)

Panel 5: Security

Discussant: Emelie Andersin (Leiden University)

- 'Co-constructing compliance: the role of private consultancies and third-party technical evaluators in military AI assurance'
Yiokasti Mouratidi (Swedish Defence University & Utrecht University)
- 'TruthSentry and Digital Sovereignty: Navigating AI-Driven Fact-Checking in the Geopolitics of the Global South'
Jibi Moses Korsuk Maring (The ClarityDesk, Excellence Foundation South Sudan) [online]
- 'AI Governance from the Margins: Hybrid Political Orders, Gendered Exclusion, and the Limits of Imported Digital Templates in African Electoral Contexts'
Antonetta Lovejoy Hamandishe (Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa)
- 'Platform Governance in Conflict Zones: Artificial Intelligence, Online Speech, and Post War Sri Lanka'
Soorya Balendra (Hashtag Generation) [online]

Workshop Theme

Geopolitical upheaval is not merely a backdrop to digital and AI governance: the two processes are mutually constitutive. Regulatory initiatives spanning the entire digital and AI value chain are being harnessed as instruments of geopolitical influence, while geopolitical tensions are simultaneously constraining, accelerating or undermining governance efforts between rival powers. Amidst the upheaval, the vocabulary of human rights has emerged as one focal area of contestation, simultaneously serving as a normative framework, a site of geopolitical instrumentalisation, and a terrain over which the meaning of rights themselves is fought over. Meanwhile, non-state entities and communities are mobilising to transform both geopolitical configurations and digital/AI governance.

This workshop seeks to examine these dynamics from a diversity of disciplinary and actor perspectives, bringing together scholars in law, international relations, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, media and communication studies, technology studies, and related fields. The aim is to nurture a multidisciplinary conversation that critically assesses the relationship between geopolitical upheaval and digital/AI governance.