

# RELATIONALITY OR HOSPITALITY IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY RESEARCH? BIG DATA, INTERNET OF THINGS, AND THE RESILIENCE OF COLONIALITY ON AFRICA<sup>a</sup>

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**Abstract:** In a supposedly relational world, African people are increasingly datafied, dehumanised and denied self-knowledge, self-mastery, self-organisation and data sovereignty. They are datafied, dehumanised and recolonised by foreign corporations and states engaged in the new scramble for African data. Arguing for more attention to data sovereignty, this article notes that the relational Internet of Things and Big Data threaten the autonomy, privacy, data, and national sovereignty of Africans. Deemed, in relational ontologies, to be lacking autonomy and to be indistinct from machines/nonhumans/animals, Africans would then be inserted or implanted with remotely controlled intelligent tracking devices that mine data from their brains, bodies, homes, cities and so on. Because technological relationality effaces distinctions between nature and culture, it legitimises mining data from human minds/bodies as if the data were natural minerals.

**Keywords:** *technological relationality, digital coloniality, Chivanhu/ Ubuntu, indigenous humanistic hospitality, African data sovereignty*

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## Introduction

Relational Big Data transformations, reconfiguring research in the twenty-first century, efface African data sovereignty, national sovereignty, epistemological sovereignty and DNA/gene sovereignty in ways that are reminiscent of the colonial epoch. Put differently, Big Data and the Internet of Things are open and relational in the sense of conjoining or linking various human and nonhuman objects, and datasets – relational theorists presuppose that entities are not important in themselves, since for them what matters most are the relational data between the entities and not the entities themselves (Crellin 2016; Kitchin 2014; Marton et al. 2013). In other words, as much as colonialists denied African autonomy and sovereignty, while using the same binary logic to distinguish themselves from the purported African Other, contemporary theories on data relationality/relational ontologies similarly deny autonomy and sovereignty to Africans who are depicted as indistinct from nonhumans from whom data can be extracted without the necessity of consent and privacy. Theorised in terms of relationality rather than hospitality, African people are ambiguated, they are denied autonomy and sovereignty and then deemed to be indistinct and indiscernible from nonhuman animals. Effacing various forms of indigenous sovereignties, contemporary data relationality theories deny indigenous human essence, identity and autonomy – relational theories presume the absence of distinctions between the human and nonhuman, ethical and unethical, inside and outside, consent and dissent, the colonial and decolonial. Emphasising connections, relations and networks between otherwise distinct objects and subjects, data relationality defies distinctions/binaries/dichotomies (Ahn 2019; Latour 2005; Wildman 2006) in ways that generate ambiguities, uncertainties and hence ignorance. On the other hand, we argue, hospitality assumes the existence of distinctions between insiders and outsiders, assumes the existence of distinctions between humans and nonhumans (but does not necessarily assume an acrimonious relationship between them), and recognises the existence of African human essence, identity, autonomy and sovereignty.

Thus, relational data assumptions of openness, borderlessness and unboundedness legitimise the contemporary implantations or insertions of smart electronic chips and intelligent nanobots (microscopic autonomous robots) into the bodies and brains of indigenous African people, who become

subject to remote control and mind manipulation via the Internet of Things (an emergent tapestry of internet that connects various environmental objects and subjects imbued with sentience) and Big Data (huge volumes of data transmitted at high velocity from objects and subjects connected in the Internet of Things). The contemporary era is marked by the growth of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence, which are unevenly centred in North America and China. Marked by the logics of economic and data extraction, Big Data has parallels with colonialism. Similar to colonialism, which placed Africans at the bottom of the world system, contemporary data colonialism places Africans at the “bottom of the data pyramid” in Arora’s (2016) sense. For this reason, while South Africa and Morocco have introduced biometric identification systems and machine to machine solutions, there are concerns that chipification and digitalisation of citizens’ identities intensifies surveillance systems and the attendant dictatorships by those who control the data notwithstanding its avowed relationality (Ndubuwaku and Okerefor 2015; Breckenridge 2005; Duncan 2014).

While relationality denies human essence and distinctions between humans and nonhumans, it is important to note that since the precolonial era, Africans were guided by tenets of *Chivanhu/Ubuntu* (from southern African languages including Shona, Nguni and Xhosa), which spell out African humanistic philosophies, including ethics and morality. In terms of *Chivanhu/Ubuntu*, human beings are expected to distinguish themselves from animals and nature by *hunhu/unhu* (although the Shona spellings are different, the meanings are the same) encompassing humanistic ethics, self-respect, accountability for one’s behaviour, civility, good manners, prudence, reverence of human nature, integrity, good behaviour, moral uprightness, humanness, respect for human life, respect for human dignity, etiquette, hospitality, autonomy, ownership and control of resources, and so on – these aspects should also apply in research that appreciates the hospitality of the Other (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuva 2017; Pearce 1990). Although some scholars have argued that Africans are animists without making distinctions between humans and animals (Burnett and waKang’ethe 1994: 156), other scholars have correctly argued that Africans are not animists, do not worship nature or even ancestors but have the notion of God/Supreme Being (Bullock 1927; Nhemachena 2017; Tempels 1959; Gelfand 1959). Put in other words, the key question for Africans is not whether or not technological objects/nature has vitality or agency or is an actor, but that human beings are defined in terms

of *hunhu/unhu* rather than simply in terms of vitality as some contemporary relational theorists would have it. In short, human beings in Africa are defined in terms of *hunhu/unhu* and not simply in terms of vitality/agency. The point here is that colonial scholarship has suffered from what is called the “crisis in representation” and there have been critical debates, for instance, as to whether anthropology, as a colonial discipline, accurately represented the colonised peoples, who are still deemed to be indistinct from nonhuman technological artefacts, in relational data systems. Of course, some colonial scholarship depicted Africans in ways that suited colonial racist ideologies and that portrayed Africans as beasts, as four legged, as one eyed monsters, and so on (Magubane 2007; Nhemachena 2017; Fanon 1963). Even Hegel, arrogantly, and in a racist way, described Africans as children of the forest, as wild and at the level of nature, as lacking morals, as people without history and as inconsequential in world history and therefore as fit for enslavement in the matrix of racial relations of the world (Adegbindin 2015; Terada 2019; Andindilile 2016). Because Africans were dehumanised and deanthroposised, as it were, during colonialism within which they were depicted and treated as indistinct from machines and animals, emancipation for them does not lie in postanthropocentrism or posthumanism but in humanisation wherein *hunhu/unhu*, rather than mere vitality or entanglements, would be central in matters of data collection. In other words, African humanism is traceable not necessarily to the European Enlightenment but to precolonial African *Chivanhu/Ubuntu*. Put differently, the Enlightenment humanised Europeans some of whom became colonialists who dehumanised African people whom they subjected to [data] colonialism.

## **African Humanism**

Because *hunhu/unhu*, which should also be applied in research, existed even during the precolonial era, scholars in Africa note that African humanity/humanism and human rights did not necessarily emanate from the European Enlightenment (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, Makuva and Mutasa 2016; Pearce 1990; Hapanyengwi and Makuva 2017). Put differently, even in precolonial Africa, human beings have been treated as distinct, separate, and discernible from animals and other aspects of nature: there has always been a recognition of human dignity and respect for human beings in Africa – human beings with *hunhu* were conceived as fully developed, complete,

humane, virtuous and morally responsible. In this regard, scholars on Africa note that *munhu* refers to an ordinary person or a truly and fully moral person with morally worthy human qualities. Therefore, *hunhu* is in contrast to animal/machine behaviour; *hunhu* is an Afrocentric conception of human dignity, autonomy, sovereignty, hospitality and human essence as distinct from animal/machinic nature or essence. Aspects of *hunhu* are encapsulated in the saying that Africans should have *hana* (be able to keep secrets/confidential information); an African human being (*munhu*) with *hana* would not expose confidential/secret or private information (*kufukura hapwa*). In fact a *munhu* with *hunhu* is guided by the proverbs *chakafukidza dzimba matenga* and *chiri mumoyo chirimuninga* (enjoining Africans not to wantonly expose confidential information about their families and marriages). Thus, there is autonomy/sovereignty in African *Ubuntu* or *Chivanhu* as encapsulated by the phrases *kuzvimiririra*; *zano pangwa uine rako* (to be autonomous and to possess one's own ideas) and as evident in the proverb *chave chigondora chave chimombe* (also translated as meaning autonomy and sovereignty). This notwithstanding, *Ubuntu/Chivanhu* also enjoins the autonomous and sovereign Africans to listen to others as evident in the proverb *zano ndega akasiya jira mumasese* (those who do not listen to advice may get into trouble). In this respect, Africans have a humanistic *hunhu*-informed relationality, which is herein understood in terms of hospitality. African people offered this hospitality to European missionaries, travellers and colonialists, including Leander Starr Jameson in Rhodesia. The colonialists interpreted this hospitality as a weakness and thus Africans were cheated and subjugated on the basis of the hospitality they gave to the strangers (Kawewe 2002; Mupfuvi 2014; Nhemachena 2017).

Notwithstanding the above, colonialists erroneously assumed that Africans were indistinct from animals, Africans were assumed to lack autonomy, sovereignty, human essence, morality, ethics, and human dignity and so the colonialists trivialised and even disregarded the hospitality African people extended to them. For this reason, if researchers theorise indigenous people in terms of contemporary [animistic] relational theories, they risk ingratitude for the hospitality they enjoyed from African people. Because one can only exercise hospitality in a defined and delimited space and place, which one owns and controls, the present article argues that theorising African people relationally in terms of [Big Data] openness, borderlessness and unboundedness was meant by colonialists to pre-empt African

claims to hospitality and sovereignty. For this reason, acknowledging the hospitality of African people would have negated and contradicted colonial assumptions of African people as savage, barbaric, backward, uncivilised, stateless, heteronomous and without sovereignty. Further, it is argued that admitting the existence of African hospitality would have made it illogical to colonise them, to invade them, to dispossess them – colonisation was similarly legitimised by theorising African people as animistically relational in the sense of being open, without borders, boundaries, without laws, without human essence, without states, without sovereignty, autonomy, ownership rights/property rights, and indistinct from animals. In other words, presumptions of such relationality undergirded colonisation wherein African people were deemed to be “relational Bushmen,” living in the open, indistinct from nonhuman animals and incapable of showing humanistic hospitality: they were erroneously deemed to live in networks of animalistic relationality rather than networks of humanistic hospitality. Arguing that decolonial researchers need to carefully think through the distinctions between relationality and hospitality, this article prefers theorising indigenous people in terms of humanistic hospitality rather than in terms of animalistic/animistic relationality. What is critiqued here is the resilient kind of colonial relationality that similarly undergird the Internet of Things and Big Data which deny African human essence, human dignity, human identity, morality, ethics and autonomy.

### **Relationality or Hospitality: Colonisation and Embodiment of the Other**

Presumed to be colonised by their own ignorance, beastly sexual desires, backwardness, cultures and bodily deformities, polities, social hierarchies and illnesses, African people were subjected to the savagery of colonial research in the same way quantified-selves technologies are operating today (Nhemachena, Mlambo and Kaundjua 2016). Thus, assumed to be internally colonised or to be suffering internal colonialism or internal defects, African people were deemed to be in need of the aid of colonialists who evangelised themselves as civilisers, liberators and messiahs in the same way contemporary Internet of Things technologies are being evangelised as liberating and progressive. Although colonialists assumed that African people were open, they also ironically presupposed that they were internally colonised or internally defective; this was meant to legitimise imperial

invasions supposedly to free African people from internal colonisation/colonialism. Thus, African polities, societies, communities and bodies were supposed to open up to the imperial Other assumed to be on a mission to decolonise the African people conceived as suffering internal colonisation. Opening up and embodying the imperial Other was considered to be an antidote to the supposed African self-colonisation; similarly, contemporary Africans are urged to open up to the Internet of Things technologies that will supposedly resolve their internal challenges or internal colonisation, as it were. For this reason, African minds, thought systems, social-cultural institutions, political and religious institutions and bodies have been subjected to colonial experiments, some of which involved opening up African people's bodies and skulls – similar to contemporary efforts to electronically insert chips and nanobots into bodies and brains of African peoples. Similar to colonial logics, wherein African people were supposed to embody the imperial Other as a supposed antidote to internal or self-colonisation, contemporary implantations or insertions of technological devices into African brains and bodies speak to information technological experiments that will be discussed in this article. There is a notable resilience of colonial suppositions that African people constitute realms of internally colonising dark matter – that they are still internally colonised by self-ignorance which necessitates embodying the imperial Other that is incarnate in the technological smart devices. In this vein, the devices designed to quantify the self erroneously presuppose that the African problem is simply to know the self and monitor that self yet Africans may very well be interested also in quantifying the imperial Others that are seeking immanence in and connection to the bodies of the colonised. Put differently, the African self has been subjected to quantification since the enslavement and colonial eras and so the only novelty that Africans would enjoy is to quantify the imperial Other in the twenty-first century. The sad thing is that the new technologies are doing a centuries-old thing, which is to quantify the African selves without allowing Africans to also quantify the imperial Other.

Connected in the Internet of Things wherein subjects and objects, humans and nonhumans are all inserted with intelligent devices to sense and transmit Big Data at high velocity in real time, African people become colonised by the systems or networks of the Internet of Things even as it is often ironically assumed that the technological devices are liberating. Colonial connections have already shown, by way of precedent, that to be connected, networked

or entangled does not translate into freedom. In so far as the technological insertions usher in posthumanism and transhumanism, we argue that they deny Africans humanity in the same way colonialists treated Africans as subhuman, as indistinct from nonhumans and so on. Similar to the colonial era, empire would emphasise African challenges such as illnesses, bodily deformities, social-cultural and political challenges and African economic challenges as apparatuses with which to cajole people to agree to embodying the imperial Other incarnate in the technological devices, including microchips to be inserted into African bodies. We argue that when empire wants to portray and present itself as a liberator rather than a coloniser, it increasingly depicts African people as self-colonised by internal colonisation that supposedly necessitate embodying the exorcist Other. The point here is that contemporary implantations and insertions with brain nanobots and microchips that are remotely controlled are fundamental forms of invasions not merely into African societies and polities but also into the brains of the people who then risk losing autonomy, sovereignty and control over their invaded mental faculties.

The foregoing underscore that theories about relationality, entanglements, posthumanism and embodiment are hardly adequately teased out in relation to decolonisation on Africa. We argue that discourses on embodiment should be teased out in relation to the logics of assimilation and incorporation that undergirded colonisation. Discourses about relationality, connections, networks and entanglements should be teased out in relation to the exigencies of decolonisation, including what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) calls *deimperialisation*. For instance, whereas decolonial scholars advocate for *deimperialisation*, other scholars note that the internet, technologies of surveillance, *dataveillance* (the monitoring of electronic data relating to personal details or online activities) and *sousveillance* (monitoring of activities by way of wearable or portable personal technologies), smart technologies and Geographical Positioning Systems are connected to or originated from the imperial militaries, secret intelligence agencies, imperial academies and governments – this results in digital colonialism, techno-colonialism and data colonialism (Couldry and Meijas 2019; Kwet 2019; Fejerskov 2017; Helbing 2017). In a world context where binaries, including between consenting and nonconsenting, are being effaced, it would be preposterous to simply impute African consent to the implantations and insertions with technological devices. The contemporary effacement of



binaries dangerously presupposes the immateriality of dichotomies between consent and dissent, agreement and disagreement, safe and unsafe, freedom and bondage, empowerment and disempowerment, humans and technology. This is particularly dangerous in a context in which the global elites and their transnational corporations and institutions are anxious to implant and insert chips, nanobots and biometric sensors into African brains and bodies, homes and cities for purposes of global surveillance, dataveillance and sousveillance in the emergent One World Government.

The upshot of the foregoing is that in a context in which binaries or dichotomies between safe and unsafe, smart and dirty, food and poison, inside and outside, human and animal, colonisation and decolonisation are effaced, it would be unwise for African people to consider smart devices to be simply smart as opposed to dangerous and dirty – it would be unwise to assume that there are material distinctions between smart homes, smart cities, smart chips, smart minds, smart power, and smart bombs (Dargiel 2009; Miller 2015). In other words, there is cause for wonder whether by embodying a smart mind, by adopting smart homes, smart cities, smart structures, smart chips, smart transport, smart cars, and so on, one is not also embodying or connecting to a smart bomb. The question is, in a context in which binaries are being effaced, would implanting one smart device (like a smart chip or nanobot) be distinct from implanting a smart bomb in the mind/brain? In a context in which there are calls for recolonisation and for new imperialism, of which Africa is already being invaded and land is being grabbed by transnational corporations (Gilley 2017; Mheta 2019), the networks, connections, implantations, insertions, relations, embodiments and entanglements can as well be colonial and neoimperial.

Thus, in a global context in which binaries between agreement and disagreement, empowerment and disempowerment, consenting and nonconsenting are being effaced, transnational corporations are noted as allowing intelligence agencies to conduct mass surveillance in the Global South using the digital ecosystem. Surveillance capitalism extracts data from the Global South, thereby perpetrating digital colonialism and data colonialism, which is a predatory form of capitalist “accumulation by dispossession” that colonises and commodifies everyday life in ways previously impossible (Kwet 2019; Couldry & Meijias 2019; Arora 2016). In this sense, the Global South is subjected to technological experimentations

(Fejerskov 2017) wherein they are expected to embody the imperial Other that is immanent in the nanobots, brain/memory chips, Internet of Things, smart homes, smart cities, smart environments, smart minds, smart structures, and so on. Similarly, colonialists experimented, in their research, on indigenous people around the world (Nhemachena, Mlambo and Kaundjua 2016). The processes of embodying the imperial Other are being conveniently theorised in terms of animistic relationality rather than in terms of indigenous humanistic hospitality. The colonial assumption in the experiments on African people was that Africans were indistinct from animals, that they did not deserve autonomy, sovereignty, human dignity, human integrity, and privacy.

Having mangled African humanistic hospitality provided at the inception of colonialism (Genger 2018; Bragg 2015), empire needs another tool or theory with which to cajole African people to re-embody imperial reincarnations in the twenty-first century and beyond. Those who seek to be embodied and offered hospitality have historically come in the guise of friendships networks but they did not hesitate to subsequently violate the bodies and domiciles of the African hosts. The issue here is whether embodying the contemporary imperial Other, immanent in implanted “smart” technological devices, does not pose risks of violence, reenslavement and recolonisation for the African hosts. Noting Derrida’s warnings that hospitality poses dangers in the sense that the visitor can become an invader or colonist who then abuses the hospitality by conquering the host (Caze 2006), we contend that embodying imperial “smart” technological devices is a form of hospitality that poses dangers to the African people. Via implantations and insertions with remotely controlled brain/memory chips and nanobots, indigenous people can be easily recolonised. Because recolonisation relies on the politics of forgetting (Verovsek 2015; Morefield 2014), we argue that the longevity and revitalisation of the present empire depends on manipulating African memories such that African autonomy and sovereignty are cancelled out. Having lost autonomy and sovereignty on Africa, African people will cease to be hosts exercising hospitality on the continent – they will become indiscernible from beasts exercising animalistic relationality in place of precolonial humanistic *Ubuntu*-informed hospitality.

Although some thinkers and scholars credit Western countries with the origins and champions of humanism, humanistic research and world order

(Kutac, Osipov and Childress 2016; Summit 2012; Schmitt 2006), other scholars from Africa have pointed out that precolonial African societies were functional human communities with ethical values, principles, rules, dignity of human beings, equality of human beings, moral behaviour, human welfare, interests and needs (Gyekye 2010). On the other hand, posthumanism assumes an absence of distinctions between humans and nonhumans (Hoppe 2019); it presupposes identity crises for indigenous people who have been regarded as indistinct from animals since the enslavement and colonial eras. Deemed to lack human essence, human dignity, integrity, identities and other human entitlements, indigenous people have had their privacy, human dignity, autonomy, sovereignty and right to life violated since the enslavement and colonial eras. Of course the slave drivers and colonialists baited Africans by dangling shining trinkets and promises of civilisation that morphed into dispossession and exploitation.

In the contemporary era, posthumanists argue that adding technological implants, like brain nanobots, and inserting DNA will improve human beings – they ignore the fact that human beings are being experimented on; that the implants with brain nanobots may cause the loss of autonomy/mind control in such a way that the carriers are controlled by the global elites; that the subjects lose privacy, memory, identities and can be permanently and remotely spied on by the global elites who own and control the technologies implanted into their brains/minds/bodies (Flores 2018). While transhumanists and posthumanists are encouraging [African] human beings to embrace the technological devices, it is necessary to note that those who “accept” the devices risk becoming slaves of the emerging global digital fascist movements by which the global elites seek to govern world citizens/netizens with technological implants and insertions (Flores 2018). In this vein, Flores (2018: 385–390) notes that:

This mafia of the transnational technology companies and the corrupt governments involve administrators of hospitals, corrupt health unions rectors, professors, librarians and university students, mafia police, prosecutors’ offices, judges, intelligence services and especially press media and its extensive network of journalists who develop an insolent campaign to promote the use of technological implants [...] The transhumanist mega-project “Safe Neighbourhood” that is also applied in other Latin American countries like Chile, to convince citizens of the

obligatory use of the cerebral internet under the argument of being a weapon against crime. The “Safe neighbourhoods” are the anteroom of the smart neighbourhoods and the “Smart City”, where the objective is for all citizens to be “smart”, use brain chips and voluntarily accept the cerebral internet, as a weapon of the government against crime [...] Thus, there would be a secret global medical network that would be executing, together with engineers, these transhumanist projects involving Schools of Human Medicine and hospitals that would be working secretly in this global transhumanist project camouflaged as telemedicine [...] The new slavery will be the human robotisation promoted by the transhumanism, and the brain nanobots and chips will be the new chains and shackles.

The brain or cerebral internet is part of the Internet of Things designed to harvest massive amounts of data, from the connected individuals, to be transmitted, processed and analysed by transnational corporations, in real time. Relying on embedded sensors and actuators in machines and other physical objects like cars, buildings, TVs, game consoles, smart meters, home appliances, medical instruments, animals, people, toys and traffic control (GSMA 2014; Patel et al. 2016), the Internet of Things entails a global distributed network of physical objects. These objects are capable of sensing or acting on their environment and to communicate with each other, with other machines and computers that capture vast quantities of data (European Parliament 2015). In this regard, brains are inserted with chips so that people will be able to buy, edit and delete memories; there will be direct uploading of encyclopaedias, databases or dictionaries into the brain and the brains will be wirelessly connected to the internet; already neuroscientists have built a technology called Braingate that wirelessly connects the human brain/mind to computers and they are now seeking to get computer chips/electronic chips to be embedded in everyone’s brain (Schermer 2009; Mark 2010; Stibel 2017; Ajemian 2017). With these “smart” technological insertions, implants and injections, human beings will become walking robots, talking robots and fighting robots (Mark 2010) – in short they will become posthuman zombies. The technologies will defy binaries between the human and nonhuman, human and technology, human and animal, nature and culture; they will unhinge African autonomy and sovereignty; they will also undo African people’s claims to intellectual property rights; and because there will be a huge capacity to move large data seamlessly across borders, the “smart” technologies will also undo African nation states’ claims to sovereignty over

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natural resources and data within their jurisdictions (Meltzer and Lovelock 2018; Third World Network 2017). With the Internet of Things and Big Data, we are witnessing a new scramble for African data – Africans are losing sovereignty over natural resources as well as sovereignty over their bodies, brains and data.

### **The New Scramble for African Data: Cannibalising Indigenous Bodies and Minds**

Thus, via the Internet of Things and associated Big Data, including smartphones, wearable technologies and wearable clothing, passively emitted data about human actions, generated and collected digitally have become available (Hammett, Twyman and Graham 2014). Big data or data science/ data revolution is machine data gathered from machines or sensors; Big Data is exhaust data such as web log or mobile phone traces; Big Data is also social data mined from the traces that people leave behind on large-scale social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter or data actively sent and contributed such as emails, free-form text images, audio and video files; Big Data also assumes the form of transactional data in the form of logs of processes, emails, stores or documents; also, Big Data is secured through electronic sensors concealed in hats, helmets and neurogadgets in iPhones (Hammett, Twyman and Graham 2014; Tana, Forss and Hellsten 2017). While the EU has strict laws about the ownership, use and dissemination of personal data, there are not as strict laws in developing countries (Hammett, Twyman and Graham 2014). In this sense, developing countries are more vulnerable to data piracy and to loss of data sovereignty which explain global coloniality (Oppermann 2016).

Although some academic disciplines have been handy in decolonisation, digital coloniality is also enhanced by some contemporary anthropological depictions of indigenous bodies and personhood as permeable, partible, porous, heteronomous and heterarchic individuals. While Western people are depicted in some scholarship as bounded, individuals, autonomous, whole, constant, fixed selves, unitary, totalised, complete, capable of expression as whole numbers, self-enclosed, sovereign, impermeable, and so on (Niehaus 2002; Patiño, Valencia and Espinosa 2018; Duncan and Schwarz 2013; Geller 2014; Fowler 2004), indigenous people are portrayed as porous, partible,

permeable, relational, composite mosaics, desecrated, fragmented bodywise, constituted and deconstituted, configured and reconfigured, maintained and altered, in constant change, fractal, incapable of expression as whole numbers, composite, unbounded, heteronomous and chaotic. During the enslavement and colonial eras, the colonised people were similarly regarded as three quarter humans, as less than human and as unwholesome. Depicted as permeable and partible, indigenous people are assumed to be violable, penetrable, decomposable, dismantle-able, open, lacking human essence, integrity and identity – they are assumed to be so imperfect, incomplete and relational that they badly require enhancement devices, chips, nanobots, biometrics and so on (Behun 2010). Thus, indigenous people will more easily be cajoled and coxed into implantations and insertions with the remotely controlled “enhancement” devices and nanobots.

Just as the enslavers and colonisers assumed the bodies of the enslaved and colonised to be open, violable, penetrable, dividual, unwholesome, partible and permeable, some contemporary anthropological theories depict enslaved and colonised bodies as distributed, as shared embodiment, as unfolded bodies that do not end at one’s skin and as inter-corporeal bodies that do not warrant individual integrity and liberty (Schick and Malmborg 2010). In the posthumanistic and postanthropocentric theories, the bodies are depicted as unfolding into “pervasive” and “ubiquitous” Internet of Things technosphere; they are deemed to be “inseparable” from the environments and from the technologies humans live through; the bodies are depicted as “inseparable” from the clothing worn close to the skin and from the technologies embedded in the interactive clothing/textiles (Schick and Malmborg 2010). Theorising bodies and personhood as individuals, permeable, partible, and so on legitimises the insertions or implantations into or onto the bodies, of small biometric sensors such as pulse sensors, nanobots, radio frequency sensors, galvanic skin-response sensors, thermos-measuring sensors and tilt sensors that facilitate global surveillance, sousveillance and dataveillance. As a way to normalise implantations and insertions with “smart” devices, posthuman bodies are celebrated by some scholars as contaminated bodies, technobodies, queer bodies, partible, permeable, already infected bodies that do not belong to the human family but to the “zoo of posthumanities” (Halberstam et al. 1995) – such posthuman bodies meet transnational capitalism’s needs for flexible bodies that allow for the flexible accumulation of Big Data (Hancock et al. 2000).

Regarded as belonging not to the family of human beings but to the zoo of posthumanities and other-than-humans, African people have historically been denied data sovereignty since the enslavement and colonial eras. In the contemporary Internet of Things and Big Data, that are legitimised by animistic relational theories, the African people are similarly denied their data sovereignty. Just as animals or nonhumans would be deemed to be undeserving of data sovereignty, enslavers and colonisers have denied Africans' data sovereignty for centuries. While the demand by African people for data sovereignty is growing in the face of Big Data and the Internet of Things, we note that the Internet of Things and Big Data are mechanisms for siphoning African peoples' data. Just like the enslavers and colonisers, who stripped data from indigenous jurisdictions, contemporary Big Data, the Internet of Things, and cloud computing siphon or extract data from indigenous jurisdictions and from indigenous physical bodies (Oguamanam 2018). Indigenous data are stolen and monopolised by data-based giants such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, e-Bay, Amazon and Wikipedia, which constitute global data merchants (Oguamanam 2018).

The contemporary Internet of Things and Big Data do not require data merchants to travel as during the colonial era. Instead, data is mined directly from the bodies and brains of the African people, from smart homes, smart cities, and so on and then they are directly sent in real time to the global data merchants. Because Big Data is regarded as messy, fuzzy and elusive (Law 2006), African people would find it difficult, if not impossible, to effectively decolonise data, that is, to ensure that data reflect African values, to avoid misrepresentation, to collect, own, control and apply their own African data (Kitchin 2014; Marley 2018; Jennings et al. 2018). In other words, the hugeness and velocity of Big Data make it difficult to decolonise the data and to make it speak to the autonomy, integrity, identity, dignity and sovereignty of African people and their states. In other words, the Internet of Things and Big Data breach African injunctions to keep confidential information/secrets in line with precepts of confidentiality in *Ubuntu*. The invasive technologies invade the Africans and then destroy their humanity and *hunhu* in such a way that they become posthumans and transhumans. Of course, just like during the colonial era, Africans are promised benefits, friendship and assistance in terms of betterment only to witness their autonomy and sovereignty destroyed. The Shona people of Zimbabwe would ask wayward people who have lost *hunhu* “*wapindwa nei/wabatwa nei?* (What has gotten into you/what

has seized you, or what has assumed immanence in you?): this underscores the fact that *hunhu* is destroyed via invasion wherein something from outside lodges inside the bodies and minds of Africans. What needs decolonisation and deconstruction is not only transcendental power but also powers that are becoming immanent in African societies, bodies and minds.

Thus, the knowledge economy and information society have turned human bodies, including brains, into mines for data – mining is no longer being done in traditional geophysical mines alone but the binaries/distinctions between the geophysical mine and the human body/mind have been effaced. With the effacement of binaries/distinctions between children and adults, the able bodied and the disabled, the healthy and the sick, humans and animals, the “smart” devices will be inserted/implanted in all and sundry so as to generate the Big Data that is necessary for global governance, including surveillance, sousveillance and dataveillance. Datafied without class and status distinctions, African people will have wearable devices, nanobots, chip insertions, wearable smart textiles or wearable clothing, smart homes with intelligent tracking devices and datafied spaces including smart cities all of which siphon African data (Lupton and Williamson 2017; Smith and Vonthethoff 2017). Also, defying binaries between the human and nonhuman, human beings will, just like livestock, be inserted with tracking devices in ways that negate privacy, individual integrity, dignity, and human rights – African people will increasingly be subjected to surveillance capitalism; they will be monitored, categorised, sorted and profiled, including in ways that defy conventional humanistic ethics (Hintz, Dencik and Wahl-Jorgensen 2018).

Constantly sending or emitting data through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so on, African people are increasingly becoming digital slaves sending data to the corporations that own the global media technology (Fuchs, 2014; Meciar, Gokten and Eren 2019). The human beings/subjects become digital labourers working to supply data to the global corporations that receive the data, but without paying the human beings from whom the data is constantly emitted. With the binary between work and play effaced, Africans would not readily know that they are operating in terms of playbour or quasi-labour (Couldry and Meijas 2019; Meciar, Gokten and Eren 2019; Ghayavat et al. 2019; Marques, Garcia and Pombo 2016) while on the digital platforms they emit data in real time and at high velocity to the transnational corporations. In other words, those from whom the data is mined via biometric devices



become workers who are not paid by corporations that benefit from the data constantly mined and emitted from the African people. If they do not cooperate, their brains, memories or minds get hacked while on the Internet of Things (Nugent et al. 2011; Marques, Garcia and Pombo 2016). The point we are making here is that the Internet of Things and Big Data, including the technological devices inserted into human brains and bodies, would make it possible for some people to hack the human mind and human bodies can also get infected by viruses in the assemblages, beyond the distinctions between human and nonhuman.

Making substantial inroads into all aspects of contemporary life, the Internet of Things ecosystem covers e-health, smart cities, smart grids, transportations, crowdsensing, ambient assisted living, smart homes and automation (Minoli, Sohraby and Occhiogrosso 2017). In this regard, huge volumes and varieties of Big Data are being collected at high velocity from smart-living environments, smart cities, bodily sensors and pervasive sensing facilitated by Wireless Sensor Networks (WSNs) technologies which integrate modern technology into daily routine (Diraco, Gcaba and Siciliano 2019; Ghayvat et al. 2015; Dlodlo, Gcaba and Smith 2016). Although these assemblages and ensembles of smart cities, smart homes and body sensors are depicted as instrumental in crime prevention, in managing city life, increasing efficiency, reducing expenses, empowerment of citizens, crowdsourcing in humanitarian crises improving the quality of life and improving health (Dlodlo, Gcaba and Smith 2016; Buschauer 2016; Arora 2016; Halkort 2019), they have serious limitations.

The devices can reverse engineer the human brain/mind, scan it, model it, insert nanobots into it and upload it into technological substrates (Kurzweil 2005; Barfield 2015), but the technology turns human beings into slaves with rewired brains. The technology, while touted to offer security against crime in the homes and cities and other spaces, has a limitation in the sense that it cannot deal with historical crimes. Put in other words, smart homes, smart cities, smart spaces in the world would become “smart” not necessarily because they have been emptied of historical crimes of enslavement and colonisation but simply because they have had “smart” technologies installed in them. In this sense, while “smart” technologies may be marketed on the basis of crime prevention, the smartness is not about the absence of criminality but in terms of concealing historical crimes. In

any case, even at the inception of colonialism, colonialists would brag that they were establishing orderly states, courts and laws to control crimes in the supposedly “savage” and “anarchic” Africa.

Furthermore, the scientists’ celebrations of their abilities to reverse engineer the human brain and to insert nanobots and chips into it may be premature if looked at in the context of the challenges of global warming caused by earlier technological innovations, that have obviously been historically celebrated as well. The rewiring of the human brain, the insertion of chips and nanobots into human brains may backfire in the same way earlier technologies backfired in terms of generating global warming. As Harari (2018) argues, the information technology may generate a breakdown of the complex human minds/brains that are being manipulated by scientists who redesign brains, extend lives, kill some human thoughts, desires, opinions and decisions. For Harari (2018), some humans will be manipulated; they will lose their freedom and autonomy; they will be inserted with chips; subjected to constant surveillance; democracy will vanish resulting in digital dictatorships; nanobots will identify human fears, hatred, cravings and manipulate human emotions; meanwhile, the global corporations capture the human attention by providing free information services/entertainment and then they will hack the deepest secrets of human life. Also, ordinary humans will find it very difficult to resist the process of datafication because they are already giving away their personal information – they will have come to rely heavily on the network for all their decisions; so, Harari (2018) likens the information technology revolution to imperialism and colonisation wherein the global elite monopolise godlike powers over the rest of humanity. Harari is intimating that, while some would celebrate the technologies as empowering, liberating and deepening accountability and democracy, the technologies are in fact oppressive and colonial in the same sense as noted by other scholars (Couldry and Meijas 2019; Halkort 2019; Ricaurte 2019).

The invasive information technologies that are used in the Internet of Things and Big Data imply that individual human beings cease to have ownership and control over their brains and minds; they also lose control over the data that is mined from them. In fact, transnational corporations will have leverages to edit and delete individuals’ human memories (Pereira, Vesnić-Alujević and Ghezzi 2014; Burkell 2016; Lavazza 2015). Keen to ensure that the enslaved and colonised people forget the wrongs of enslavement and

imperialism, the possibilities are high that the global elite will increasingly delete and edit some African people's memories connected to contemporary African struggles for restitution and reparations. In this sense, world peace will be achieved by deleting and editing memories of enslaved and colonised people. Already, there are arguments that forgetfulness and erasure of data are necessary for people to grow and change (Pereira, Vesnić-Alujević and Ghezzi 2014; Burkell 2016). Also, neuroscientific research on the removal of "unpleasant" and "traumatic" memories is already making strides even if such a removal of memories threatens core identities, authenticity and human essences (Lavazza 2015). Editing, deleting and changing the memories of African people is one possible political function of the "smart" technologies inserted or implanted into the brain/mind. Such editing and deleting of the memories will depoliticise African people by depriving them of memories on the basis of which they are launching African struggles for restitution and reparations for enslavement and colonisation.

Similarly, the insertions of technological devices should not necessarily be narrowly understood as a revitalisation of indigenous people's bodies or as restoring connections, relations, networks, vitality, animism and sacredness (Young and Nadeau 2005; Vaai and Nabobo-Baba 2017; Chilisa et al. 2016; Gerlach 2018). On the contrary, the devices erode African people's individual integrity, human dignity, privacy and human essence. African people should not be simplistically portrayed as seeking to restore sacredness, vitality, relations, connections or networks (Young and Nadeau 2005) – they are also *a fortiori* interested in ownership and control of their tangible and intangible heritages, yet this quest requires autonomy and sovereignty which are sadly denied by contemporary theorisations of animistic relationality.

Portrayed as having relational selves (indistinct from animals/nonhumans) as opposed to Western nonrelational selves (distinct from animals/nonhumans) (Chilisa et al. 2016; Vaai and Nabobo-Baba 2017; Gerlach 2018), indigenous people are assumed to be disposable, dispensable, and not entitled to ownership of resources including their data sovereignty. As hinted above, animistic relationality, as opposed to humanistic hospitality, presupposes that indigenous people are open, live in the open as assumed by the epithet "Bushmen," are unbounded, do not have autonomy, sovereignty and do not have homes that are bounded. On the other hand, hospitality presupposes autonomy, sovereignty, boundedness, human essence, it assumes

a distinction between foreign and domestic, self and other, relatives and nonrelatives (Genger 2018; Bragg 2015; Verdeja 2014; Chukwu 2015). If one has no bounded home, territory or domicile, one cannot be a host; one can only relate without being a host to anyone because one cannot be a host to openness, unboundedness or to a bush, as for “Bushmen” that are assumed to live in the open. Therefore, to concede to openness and unboundedness is to concede to being a “Bushman” of an African.

In this regard, Fanon (1963: 42–43) observed, referring to the colonialists’ treatment of the humanistic and hospitable indigenous people, that this treatment:

[...] dehumanizes the native and turns him into an animal. In fact, the terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms. He speaks of the Yellow man’s reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulation [...] The native knows all this, and laughs to himself every time he spots an allusion to the animal world in the Other’s words. For he knows that he is not an animal; and it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure its victory.

Records of such a denigrating and dehumanising treatment of indigenous people across the world have been deleted and edited at the time independence was granted. Efforts to delete and edit colonial archives have been widely reported, for instance with reference to the British empire; Britain has deleted sensitive, shameful and incriminating colonial archives so that they would not fall into the hands of postcolonial states or postindependence governments (Sato 2017; Cooke and Reichelt-Brushett 2014). The point here is that the human mind would similarly be technologically subjected to editions and deletions in the same way that national and international archives are deleted and edited so as to erase histories of enslavement and colonial crimes. The societies that will emerge from such deletions will be post-truth societies as well as postpolitical societies (Nhemachena and Warikandwa 2019) that deny both truth and political space to African people whose memories are deleted and edited. The politics of memory and of memorialisation have been evident in Africa where colonialists archived and memorialised their own heroes, attached themselves to African territories and land in ways that spoke to colonial memorialisation; yet on gaining independence, African

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nationalist states edited and deleted colonial archives and memorialisation  
in ways that annoyed colonialists and their descendants (Fisher 2010).

Noting that posthumanism is occurring in the context of the growth of the internet, which unfortunately is embedded in the framework of the intelligence, military, academic, government and corporate politics (Marshall 2006: 14; Maquire and McGee 1999; Chossudovsky 2018), the present article critically interrogates the ethics of editing and deleting indigenous memories. We note that the shift from attachments to territorial nation states/spaces to digital/cyberspaces – shifting identities from citizens to netizens – is itself unsettling to the African national archives and memorialisation. Yet, once trapped into netizenry, African people have their memories deleted and edited as well as in ways that further destroy the cognitive archives. In this regard, we concur with Braidotti (2017: 31–32) who argues that:

The convergence between different and previously differentiated branches of technology – notably nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and cognitive sciences – has placed traditional understandings of the human under extreme pressure. The biogenetic structure of contemporary capitalism involves investments in “life” as an informational system; stem cell research and biotechnological intervention upon humans; animals, seeds, cells, and plants pave the way for scientific and economic control and the commodification of all that lives [...] The data-mining techniques employed by “cognitive capitalism” to monitor the capacities of “biomediated” bodies – DNA testing, brain fingerprinting, neural imaging, body heat detection, and iris or hand recognition – are also operationalized in systems of surveillance...

In light of the above, studies of the future, futurology, anticipation studies, forecasts of the future, speculative studies including speculative anthropology, anticipatory anthropology, anthropology of the future and anthropology of expectation (Strzelecka 2013; Granjou, Walker and Salazar 2017) are imperative. Against the background of enslavement and colonisation, we argue that to commodify human lives requires the effacement of distinctions between humans and nonhumans, the ethical and nonethical: the posthuman future threatens to do exactly that – erode distinctions/binaries/dichotomies in an era in which there is an increasing commodification of African human life.

The fact that transnational mining corporations have scarified the African environment makes us wonder whether data mining through the Internet of Things and Big Data would not also scarify the brains and bodies of indigenous people that are implanted with the smart devices to mine data. Apart from the fact that the networked empire sets the agenda in the world of communicative capitalism (Dean and Passavant 2004; Fuchs 2007), we note that the world has failed to ensure corporate social responsibility that would have mollified the humans who get subjected to insertions and implantations with electronic chips and nanobots. While domination, hegemony and oppression have been conceived in terms of states, we argue that colonisation also occurs through processes, flows, circulations of tangible and intangible resources including data.

The point in the foregoing is that oppression and domination in Africa do not happen simply because of states, statuses or structures – they also happen *a fortiori* because of imperial and neocolonial processes, flows, circulations and connections beyond the nation state, beyond stasis and beyond statuses in Africa. In this regard, there is a need to decolonise networks, connections, flows and processes constituting global coloniality. Because the flows and processes deprive African people of data sovereignty, for the Africans, the knowledge or information society will in fact be an ignorance society. In such ignorance societies, characterised by the absence of data sovereignty and of state sovereignty, African knowledge systems will be constantly streamed out of networked African communities and African bodies to the transnational corporations. As African data is constantly siphoned away through Big Data, it will become increasingly difficult to realise Pan Africanism, Afrocentricity and African Renaissance. The African communities, individuals and the continent will be bypassed by the Big Data – Africanisation will thus become a pipe dream because to Africanise and to create African Renaissance requires African data sovereignty.

With African people's minds scanned and uploaded onto technological substrates (Thoren and Edenius 2018; Kuhn 2015), it becomes more than difficult to decolonise, Africanise and establish African Renaissance. With Africans increasingly becoming posthumans, it will become difficult to assert African human identities and human essence which are necessary to resist enslavement and recolonisation. Thus, fitted like slaves, vehicles and animals, with tracking devices, with identification tattoos, chip insertions,

GPS-enabled collars, slave collars and tags in the logics of biometric wearable devices (Weber 2006; Dawson 2003; Gasson 2010), Africans would fail to resist enslavement and colonisation once they accept that they are indistinct from animals/nonhumans machines. The enslaved were historically forced to wear iron or copper slave collars and tags (Thums et al. 2018; Gasson 2010), which made it difficult for them to physically run away/escape without being identified and caught by their masters – in the contemporary era, African people are similarly cajoled to wear biometric devices that datafy them and make them easily identifiable and trackable. They would find it impossible to cognitively divorce empire or to deimperialise because the remotely controlled smart devices will have been inserted or implanted into their memories/brains/homes.

We argue that decolonisation should not necessarily be interchangeable or synonymous with deconstructing Africans, or with antistructure, anarchism, chaos, heteronomy, heterarchy, onticology or the flatness of Africa (Gordon 2017; Knickerbocker 2015). Decolonial research methods must emphasise African data sovereignty, ownership and control of data about themselves as well as utilisation of the data for the betterment of their indigenous societies and communities. Also, decolonial research methods must be about reaffirming Africans' autonomy, sovereignty, inviolability, structures of integrity and order. Whereas colonialists historically destroyed the Africans' sovereignty, autonomy, order, hierarchies, structures, human identities and essence, contemporary decolonial research must reassert African autonomy, sovereignty, structures, integrity, human essence, identities, memories and so on. Colonisation was not necessarily about setting up structures or order for the colonised, rather colonisation was about destroying African forms of order, structures, autonomy, sovereignty and identities. In this regard, decolonisation should not continue to destroy or impair African order, identity, autonomy, integrity, dignity, sovereignty, structures and so on – decolonisation must reaffirm African structures and forms of order.

In a world marked by the presence of global apartheid, decolonisation should not be simplistically construed in terms of inclusivity. To be included in global apartheid structures does not amount to being decolonised; to be recognised, assimilated, connected, linked, networked and related to such global apartheid does not amount to being decolonised. Even the enslaved and colonised peoples were also included, connected, assimilated, networked

and linked to empire (Van Krieken 2003; Elinghaus 2009), yet this did not amount to decolonisation. Although the logics of the Internet of Things, networks, relationality and Big Data are embedded in inclusivity, we note that colonial problems that are haunting African people also emanate from their assimilation into the global matrices of power, which thrives on mining material resources as well as data/information from the African people. The devices are therefore inserted/implanted to also manipulate the African minds and adjust them to the needs and interests of the global matrices of power.

### **Structural Adjustment of Indigenous Minds (SAIM): Bypassing Autonomy and Sovereignty**

Insertions or implantations of invasive pieces of intelligent technologies into human brains, bodies, homes and African indigenous spaces are risky, particularly when understood in the light of the colonial/imperial destruction of indigenous institutions that they penetrated/invaded first. Recently, the neoliberal shocks that were administered to African states, through the economic structural adjustment programs (ESAP), underscore the possibility that transnational corporations and global elites could implant/insert “smart” devices in indigenous people’s brains/minds only to subsequently administer shocks on/in them as ways to create what we call the structural adjustment of indigenous minds (SAIM). The point we are making is that since enslavers and colonisers achieved their goals by terrorising the indigenous people, it would be unimaginable for contemporary indigenous people to be terrorised by an empire that will have assumed immanence in their brains and bodies, via chip and nanobot insertions/implantations. Put in other words, we are arguing that in a world in which global elites and their transnational corporations often take pleasure in sanctioning other people, the penalty of mental shocks and sanctions would be worse for indigenous people that would have chips and nanobots inserted/implanted into their brains/bodies for remote control. Once empire is technologically lodged in indigenous brains, it will become impossible to decolonise and resist the imperial force and its voice within.

In addition to the above, if the global elites and their transnational corporations insert chips into human brains for remote control and



surveillance, it would become very easy for them to induce insurgencies and rebellions in the indigenous nation states, simply by pressing remote control buttons. African states are already loathed and described as weak, failed, corrupt, rogue, and so on and some African states are already subjected to anarchist revolutions, insurgencies and coups on the bases of networks of new technologies (Crofford 2015; Engdahl 2007; Bennett and Hodge 2011; Findlen 2018). Since Big Data is remotely connected between the individuals emitting the data and the big screens of transnational companies, it would be possible for the global elites to monitor and evaluate the behaviour of those connected to the Internet of Things and Big Data. In other words, just like in the case of economic structural adjustment programs that retrenched African states from controlling the economies, the structural adjustment of indigenous minds (SAIM) will also retrench African states from governing African citizens/netizens who get connected to the Internet of Things and Big Data, which bypass the African states. Therefore, as much as colonialists and imperialists historically bypassed and made precolonial African states irrelevant, contemporary global coloniality is also designing programs to bypass and render the African states irrelevant. Africans are colonised not simplistically, by being dominated and oppressed by global matrices of power, but by being bypassed and rendered irrelevant in their own communities, nation states, on their own continent and in the wider world. Colonisation/imperialism is not all about domination, oppression, hierarchies, dictatorship, authoritarianism, and so on – it is also about rendering indigenous people moribund or irrelevant. African marriages, states, health systems, education systems, religions, cultures, knowledge systems, laws, customs, economies, and so on have been rendered irrelevant since the colonial era. To resist colonisation, it is necessary to resist becoming contextually irrelevant as African people. Scholars of decolonisation need to appreciate the subtleties of colonisation, including global coloniality. Africans and their states are also colonised through being deconstructed and retrenched. In this regard, it is necessary for African states to localise the flow of information/data so that they retain national and data sovereignty of the territories as is being done in other places (Hicks 2019). Local participatory methods alone will not be effective against transnational corporations with extrajurisdictional domiciles – data localisation and sovereignisation are also necessary.

## Conclusion

Noting that empire relied on networks, connections and relationality, this article has argued that the Internet of Things and Big Data are not necessarily decolonial: they are used to mine data from African people who are often denied data sovereignty, autonomy and human integrity. The article further argued that it is more appropriate to theorise African indigeneity in terms of hospitality than it is to do so through contemporary animistic relationality and relational research methods. Relationality assumes openness, that there are no distinctions between African human beings and animals, that African people do not have or even deserve sovereignty and autonomy – the same assumptions that were made by colonialists. On the other hand, it is noted that theorising African indigeneity in terms of hospitality does not take away African human essence, autonomy and sovereignty; it affirms distinctions between African human beings and animals. While contemporary relational ontologies would discount humanism and humanist ethics, theorising African indigeneity in terms of hospitality would reaffirm the humanism and humanist ethics that African people are known for since the precolonial era. Whereas hospitality theories would affirm African sovereignty, autonomy, human essence, ownership and control over their material resources and data, animistic relationality theories would deny the same to African peoples. The article therefore urges scholars and researchers to consider African humanistic ethics, including *hunhu/unhu* which set African human beings clearly apart from nonhuman animals. Shona proverbs, such as *guyu kutsvuka kunze mukati rine masvosve* (people must not be deceived by the attractive appearances of fruits some of which may contain ants), encourage human beings to analyse things beyond their seemingly good appearances. In this regard, while the technologies examined in this article have beneficial sides, they also have their dark sides which may need to be considered as well.

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