Book Launch: Disrupting Africa Technology, Law and Development by Olufunmilayo B. Arewa

By:

Institute for Humanities in Africa
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Abstract

In the digital era, many African countries sit at the crossroads of a potential future that will be shaped by digital-era technologies with existing laws and institutions constructed under conditions of colonial and post-colonial authoritarian rule. In Disrupting Africa, Olufunmilayo B. Arewa examines this intersection and shows how it encompasses existing and new zones of contestation based on ethnicity, religion, region, age and other sources of division. Arewa highlights specific collisions between the old and the new, including in the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, which involved young people engaging with varied digital era technologies who provoked a violent response from rulers threatened by the prospect of political change. Using materials from extensive archival research, Arewa demonstrates how

lawmaking and legal process during and after colonialism continue to frame contexts in which digital technologies are created, implemented, regulated, and used in Africa today.

OLUFUNMILAYO ("FUNMI") AREWA

Olufunmilayo ("Funmi") Arewa is the Shusterman Professor of Business and Transactional Law at Temple University Beasley School of Law. She received an M.A. and Ph.D (Anthropology) from the University of California, Berkeley, and A.M (Applied Economics) from the University of Michigan, a J.D. from Harvard Law School, and an A.B. from Harvard College. Her research focuses on technology, music, film, business, and African studies. Prior to becoming a law professor, she practiced law for nearly a decade, working in legal and business positions in the entrepreneurial and technology startup arena, including law firms and companies in Silicon Valley, New York, and Boston. Before becoming a lawyer, she was a Visiting Lecturer at the Centre for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS) at the University of Michigan and served as a Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. and Montevideo, Uruguay. She has served as Vice Chair of the Nigeria Copyright Expert Working Group, worked on projects relating to education and scientific and technological capacity in Africa, and served as a lead consultant for a project examining the feasibility of establishing a venture capital fund in the Eastern Caribbean. In 2019, she was a Fellow at the Kate Hamburger Centre for Advanced Study in the Humanities at Universitat Bonn for a research project entitled Disruptive Technologies, Digital Colonialism, and the Construction of Commercial Law in Africa. In 2015, she received a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Faculty Visit Research Grant at Humboldt-Universitat zu Berlin for a research project entitled Cultural, Legal, and Business Considerations in the Difussion of Jazz in Germany, a project that is connected to her forthcoming book; Creating Global Markets for Black Culture: Curation, Music, and Law. She served as Vice Chair of the Nigerian Copyright Expert Working Group. In addition to writing about music, Professor Arewa has studied classical voice for many years.

Discussants

Bill Maurer: Dean of the School of Social Sciences at the University of California, Irvine

Rogers Orock: Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand

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