

Department of Politics
and International Relations



4DPRU
4IR & DIGITAL POLICY
RESEARCH UNIT

CALL FOR CHAPTERS

African Women in the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Change, Policies and Approaches

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The coronavirus pandemic has fostered a historic digital transition on an unprecedented scale in the global economy. Digital technology adoption has transformed both the public and private sectors of different economies, specifically in the agricultural sector. As a result, the global economy is faced with implementing digital technology systems and ecosystems that enable or empower people to access technology. Empowerment in digital technology also allows people to access services, engage with each other, and pursue economic opportunities. Furthermore, the transition to a digitalised society comes with the risk of increasing inequality. Despite all the policies implemented by African states and the recent adoption of the fourth industrial revolution in South Africa, women's challenges in the form of lower access to digital inclusion seem amplified.

However, evidence has shown that implementing digital transformation will foster new opportunities for gender equality and women's economic empowerment. To this end, access to the internet was declared a fundamental human right by the United Nations in 2016. Despite this, more than 4 billion people, representing 55% of the world's population, still do not have access. The digital divide in some countries may include a lack of equitable access to

infrastructure or a deliberate attempt by governments to restrict Internet access to citizens. Women represent the majority of those without access to the internet, limiting their social, political, and economic participation in globalisation.

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector in Africa has increased with the invention of mobile phone technology and services which have generated more than 1.7 million jobs in the formal and informal sectors (Mishra & Maheshwari, 2020). The development of the ICT has also contributed about 8.5 per cent of nominal GDP, amounting to US\$144 billion economic value to the African continent. Another \$15.6 billion is contributed to the African public sector through taxation (Mishra & Maheshwari, 2020). In addition, digitisation plays various roles in the fourth industrial revolution, encouraging economic growth and structural transformation.

For some observers, the fourth industrial revolution promises to help fight poverty and inequality, restore peace, and has other multiple functions to perform. We note at least four in the literature. The first role is that it is expected to encourage growth and structural transformation (Marwala, 2020). Secondly, it can help bridge poverty and inequality as it empowers the disadvantaged and marginalised to access information, job opportunities, and services that can improve their standard of living and improve safety (Schwab, 2016). The third role is that the fourth industrial revolution can, with cogent policies in place, help the African working population better be skilled and empowered by re-inventing labour skills and production (Mazibuko-Makena and Kraemer-Mbula, 2021). Finally, healthcare, and human capital are also vital roles of the fourth industrial revolution as it promotes sustainable health care systems in the rural areas (Schulze, 2019; Mazibuko-Makena, 2020).

However, the transition to a hyper-digitalised society comes with the risk of increasing inequality. Despite a range of policies implemented by African states and the recent adoption of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) by numerous governments, the reality of gendered digital exclusion in all structural levels has been amplified. Even when adopted, 4IR technologies have been demonstrated to be inherently biased towards blacks and women due to being mostly made by men in non-African settings. This book aims to present the different policy approaches taken in African countries, and their preparedness for the technologies that enable the 4IR for women across all disciplines. This book intends to provide analyses of the several significant themes stated below and African states' efforts in implementing gender

sensitive information on technology policies. The findings intend to analyse the effectiveness of the countries' approaches and shared lessons that African different economies, whether currently booming or struggling, can enhance or implement towards the 4IR at all structural levels. Contributions to the book will adopt a gender policy-centric approach as its method of inquiry which is to be guided by the following themes:

- i. Gender, Social Policy and Institutions
- ii. Gender Political Participation
- iii. Gender and Economic Change
- iv. Gender, Violence and Discrimination
- v. African States Political Economy
- vi. Covid 19 and Digital Transformation
- vii. Politics, Conflict and Political Instability
- viii. Gender Based Violence
- ix. Women, Minorities and Gender mainstreaming in Education
- x. The UN, African Union, Gender and Human Rights
- xi. Democracy, Leadership and Governance
- xii. Education, ICT, teleconferencing, webinars, networking, and e-Learning
- xiii. Conflict Transformation and Peace Building Issues
- xiv. Human Rights and Sustainable Development
- xv. Women and minorities in legal issues
- xvi. Gender and ICT in Africa
- xvii. Gender, Women and Development in Africa
- xviii. Democracy, Leadership and Governance
- xix. Gender Based Violence and the 4IR
- xx. Critical Algorithm Studies
- xxi. Internet Governance and e-learning.
- xxii. Digitalisation and Health Governance.
- xxiii. Technical Training, Science, Technology and Sustainable Development
- xxiv. Natural Resource Management, agriculture, livestock, and fisheries
- xxv. Research and Development (R&D) and Sustainable Development
- xxvi. Industrial Parks and Innovation Villages and Sustainable Development
- xxvii. Innovation, Science, Technology and Environment
- xxviii. ICT, Science and Technology and Sustainable Development

- xxix. Science, Technology, Gender and Sustainable Development
- xxx. Science, Children and Youth and Sustainable Development
- xxxi. Health Tourism, Medicine
- xxxii. HIV and AIDS
- xxxiii. Transport (Roads, railways, ports, and harbours) and Sustainable Development
- xxxiv. Informal (Jua kali) sector and non-formal sector and Sustainable Development
- xxxv. Abstracts on any other relevant topic are welcome

The above themes should serve as a guide for the compilation of state-specific profiles on different national approaches to gender policies in the 4IR and how gender is incorporated into these approaches (if at all). The main objective of this volume is understanding different approaches to gender issues in the 4IR at a national level to help encourage reflection on what lessons could be learnt between states as well as what factors cause divergence in multilateral settings so that they can be understood and hopefully addressed.

The editors welcome abstracts on different African national (state) approaches to different gender issues in the 4IR for consideration of no more than 300 words in length. Abstracts should be submitted to Dr Tinuade Ojo by the **28th of February 2022** via email: tinuadeo@uj.ac.za.

Abstracts will be chosen based on adherence to theme, quality, originality and regional diversity. The chapters will be considered by the editors and Lexington Books, a division of Rowman & Littlefield, and feedback will be provided to potential contributors within a month.