

## Rethinking Knowledge Production on Africa beyond data sources: Addressing the Systemic Silence of Africa's original theoretical contribution and innovation

*Thursday, 19 June 2025 13:15 (1h 30m)*

While global and local crises affect all nations, research on Africa is often framed through foreign theoretical frameworks that may not fully capture their complexities. Too frequently, Africa is positioned merely as a data source, with external lenses framing or interpreting its rich complexities. This approach, driven in part by institutional pressures to align with established theories, often obscures Africa's diverse realities and silences its theoretical innovations and contributions. Consequently, African research seldom presents distinct epistemic perspectives that resonate authentically with local contexts or addresses the continent's broader crises.

This panel seeks to examine the systemic erasure of African theories in academic discourse and seeks to reposition African epistemologies at the centre of knowledge production about the continent. The panel would discuss papers from all disciplines that explore researchers' experiences in navigating the tension between institutional demands for established and often external theoretical frameworks whether they complement their research or problematize their academic writing on Africa.

Topics include the systemic invisibility of African theories, the implications for Africa's role in global knowledge production, the epistemic constraints imposed on African scholars, and the impact of these practices on theoretical innovation within African scholarship. Specifically, panelist would focus on:

- Interrogating the impulse to prioritize non-African theories in African research
- Examining the impact of this practice on Africa's role in global scholarship
- Highlighting overlooked examples of African theoretical innovation
- Proposing methodologies for centering African epistemologies
- Discussing the implications of foreign theoretical frameworks on knowledge production about Africa

By critically engaging with these issues, we hope to contribute to a more equitable and diverse academic landscape that amplifies African theoretical innovations and contributions.

**Track Classification:** Africa and International Studies Working Group