

## SEYRAM AVLE

+1-781-330-6401

savle@umass.edu | [www.seyramavle.com](http://www.seyramavle.com)

[Google Scholar](#) | [Research Gate](#)

---

### EDUCATION

PhD, Communication Studies, University of Michigan, September 2008 - December 2014

Certificate, Network Analysis, University of Michigan, July 2011

Certificate, Comparative Media, Oxford University, July 2010

BA (cum laude), Economics and English Literature (with honors), Brandeis University, August 2003 - May 2007

---

### ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Assistant Professor (Global Digital Media), Department of Communication, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, September 2018 – present

Fellow (Africa/Asia Initiative), Center for African Studies, Harvard University, January – May 2021

Research Fellow & Investigator, School of Information, University of Michigan, January 2015 – August 2018

---

### RESEARCH AREAS

Digital technologies; global media; tech entrepreneurship & innovation; transnational collaborations

Regions: Africa, China, USA

---

### REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES

**Avle, S.** (2020a). 'Radio via mobile phones: The intersecting logics of media technologies in Ghana. *Media, Culture, and Society*. Volume 42, Issue 5, pp 789 -799. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720923490>

**Avle, S.,** Lin, C., Hardy, J. & Lindtner, S. (2020). Scaling techno-optimistic visions. *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society*, Volume 6 (2020), pp 237 – 254. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17351/ests2020.283>

**Avle, S.** & Adunbi, O. (2015) 'Whose freedom? Which information? – Discourses on Freedom of Information policies. *Journal of Information Policy*. Volume 5, pp 179 – 203. DOI: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jinfopoli.5.2015.0179>

**Avle, S.** (2014) 'Articulating and enacting development: Skilled returnees in Ghana's ICT industry'. *Information Technologies & International Development*. Volume 10, Issue 4, pp 1-13. DOI: <https://itidjournal.org/index.php/itid/article/view/1305/504.html>

**Avle, S.** (2012) 'Flux mondiaux, médias et démocraties en développement: Le cas du Ghana'. *Afrique Contemporaine* 2011/4 (n° 240), pp. 93-107. [French translation of Global Flows]. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3917/afco.240.0093>

**Avle, S.** (2011) 'Global flows, media and developing democracies: The Ghanaian case'. *Journal of African Media Studies*. Volume 3, Issue 1, pp. 7–23. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1386/jams.3.1.7\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jams.3.1.7_1)

---

### REFEREED CONFERENCE ARTICLES

**Avle, S.** (2020b). Making as imaginative crossroads: Ghanaian makers and the geopolitics of technological progress. Proceedings of Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T). 2020; 57: e298. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/pr2.298>

**Avle, S.,** Hui, J., Lindtner, S. & Dillahunt, T. (2019). Additional labors of the entrepreneurial self. Proceedings of the

- ACM: Human-Computer Interaction. Volume 3, Issue CSCW. November 2019. Article 218, pp 1-24. DOI: <https://doi-org.silk.library.umass.edu/10.1145/3359320>
- Soden, R., Ribes, D., Jack, M., Sutherland, W., Khovanskaya, V., **Avle, S.**, Sengers, P. & Bødker, S. (2019). Fostering Historical Research in CSCW & HCI. Conference Companion Publication of the 2019 Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW), Austin, TX, USA pp 517-522. DOI: <https://doi-org.silk.library.umass.edu/10.1145/3311957.3359436>
- Avle, S.**, Lindtner, S., & Williams, K. (2017). How methods make designers. Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '17), pp 472- 483. DOI: <https://doiorg.silk.library.umass.edu/10.1145/3025453.3025864>
- Lindtner, S. & **Avle, S.** (2017). Tinkering with governance: Technopolitics and the economization of citizenship. Proceedings of the ACM: Human-Computer Interaction. Volume 1, Issue CSCW. December 2017, Article 70, pp 1-18. DOI: <https://doi-org.silk.library.umass.edu/10.1145/3134705>
- Avle, S.** & Lindtner, S. (2016). Design(ing) 'here' and 'there': Tech entrepreneurs, global markets, and reflexivity in design processes. Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '16), pp 2233 - 2245. DOI: <https://doi-org.silk.library.umass.edu/10.1145/2858036.2858509>
- 

### BOOK CHAPTERS

- Avle, S.** (2020c). Articulando e performando desenvolvimento: retornantes qualificados no negócio de TICs do Gana. In Silva, T. (ed). *Comunidades, Algoritmos e Ativismos Digitais: Olhares Afrodiaspóricos*. IBPAD/Literua Brazil, pp 230-252. [Portuguese translation of Articulating & Enacting Development]
- Avle, S.**, Quartey, E., & Hutchful, D. (2018a). Research on mobile phone data in the global south: Opportunities and challenges. In Foucault-Welles, B. & Gonzales-Bailon, S. (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Networked Communication*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp 488-509.
- Avle, S.** (2016a) 'Radio locked on @citi973': FM radio audiences on Twitter. In Willems, W. & Mano, W. (eds). *From audiences to users: Everyday media culture in Africa*. London; New York: Routledge, pp 161-179.
- Avle, S.** (2016b) Situating Ghana's new media industry: liberalization and transnational entrepreneurship. In Aslinger, B. & Haleboua, G. (eds). *Locating Emerging Media*. London; New York: Routledge, pp 123-138.
- 

### INDUSTRY REPORTS

- Avle, S.**, Li, D., & Lindtner, S. (2018b) Responsible IoT after technosolutionism. In Kruger, M. (ed). *The ThingsCon Report: The State of Responsible IoT 2018*. Berlin: ThingsCon E.V, pp 90-94.
- 

### UNDER REVIEW

- Jack, M. and **Avle, S.** A feminist geopolitics of technology. [*Global Perspectives*; Revised & Resubmitted]
- Nikoi, N. & **Avle S.** In between hogging and passing the mic: Or, the unintended consequences of networked radio. [*Bandung Journal of the Global South*; Revised & Resubmitted]
- 

### MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

- Avle, S.** The dual sublime: Tech entrepreneurship and labouring for the future. [Book]
- Avle, S.** Designing the south: Chinese and African tech collaborations in a changing world. [Journal].
- Hailemariam, N. & **Avle, S.** Designed in Ethiopia, Made in China/ Designed in China, Made in Ethiopia. [Journal].
- Avle, S.** & Straube, T. The politics and economics of global AI: Chinese facial recognition in Zimbabwe. [Workshop]
- Avle, S.** Transsion in Africa: New dynamisms in the geopolitics of digital technologies [Journal].
- Soden, R., Ribes, D, **Avle, S.** Sutherland, W. and Vertesi J. 'Time for historicism in CSCW: An invitation' [Journal]
-

## **FUNDED RESEARCH AWARDS**

**Innovation and technology entrepreneurship cultures between Ghana, south China, and Silicon Valley** (Jan 2017 – Dec 2021)

Funding Source: National Science Foundation (NSF)

Amount: \$499, 441

Role: Co-PI

PI: Silvia Lindtner (Information, U of Michigan)

**How do-it-yourself makers are reinventing production, labor, and innovation** (Jun 2015 – Dec 2016)

Funding Source: National Science Foundation (NSF)

Amount: \$499, 168

Role: Postdoc

PI: Silvia Lindtner (Information, U of Michigan)

**Unintended consequences of technology in development: A cross-section analysis** (Aug 2014 – May 2015)

Funding Source: University of Michigan M Cubed

Amount: \$60, 000

Role: Graduate Research Assistant

PIs: Omolade Adunbi (African Studies, U of Michigan), Joyojeet Pal (Information, U of Michigan), Bilal Butt (Natural Resources and Environment, U of Michigan)

---

## **OTHER FUNDED AWARDS**

**Platform and Data Matters Seminar Series** (2019)

Funding Source: University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Amount: \$3, 450

Role: Convener

Co-convener: Jonathan Ong (Communication, UMass Amherst)

**Global Technological Futures Reading Group** (2020)

Funding Source: University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Amount: \$500

Role: Convener

Co-convener: Burcu Baykurt (Communication, UMass Amherst), Soo Young Bae (Communication, UMass Amherst)

---

## **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

Working out the 'dual sublime': Gender in Sino-African tech entrepreneurial spaces. African Studies Association (ASA), [Virtual]. November 19, 2020

Designed in Ethiopia, Made in China. 14<sup>th</sup> Annual China Goes Global, [Virtual, with Nael Hailemariam]. August 7, 2020.

Mapping Contemporary (Re)Imaginations of a Globalized Black African Diaspora: FEVA and IROKO TV. Media Industries Conference, London, UK [Scheduled for April 16, 2020, Canceled due to pandemic].

Technology Made-in-Ghana via China. Chinese in African /Africans in China (CA/AC), Hong Kong. [Scheduled for July 9, 2020, Postponed due to pandemic].

Ethics and Equity Panel. Bose-NSF Future of Work Conference. Framingham, MA. November 13, 2019.

Additional labors of the entrepreneurial self. Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), Austin, TX. November 11, 2019.

IoT as Imaginative Crossroads: Ghanaian makers and the politics of technology progress.' International

Communication Association (ICA), Washington DC. May 28, 2019.

Anything is possible: Technology in the China-Africa relationship. African Studies Association (ASA), Atlanta, GA. December 1, 2018.

Identity, Labor, and the Work of Producing Digital Technologies 'From the Periphery.' International Communication Association (ICA), Prague, Czech Republic. May 28, 2018.

Futurity and designing digital technologies 'The African Way'. International Communication Association (ICA), Prague, Czech Republic. May 23, 2018.

Experiencing innovation. Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S) Boston, MA. September 3, 2017.

FM radio via mobile phones: The intersecting logics of radio and mobiles in Ghana. International Communication Association (ICA), San Diego, CA, May 25, 2017.

Challenges to FOI: The view from Africa. International Communication Association (ICA), San Diego, CA. May 29, 2017.

Made in Africa: Making, doing, and the labor of future-making. Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S)/European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST). Barcelona, Spain. September 30, 2017.

Global technology companies and the pursuit of the 'bottom billion' [with Pearson, B.A.J.]. International Communication Association (ICA), Fukuoka, Japan, June 13, 2016.

Whose freedom? Which information?: Discourses on Freedom of Information. International Association of Media & Communication Research (IAMCR), Montreal, Canada, July 15, 2015.

Networked radio: The role of social media interactivity in radio broadcasts in Ghana. International Communication Association (ICA), San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 25, 2015.

Bridging the North-South Divide in Mobile Research: Assumptions, Questions, and Strategies. International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development, Singapore, May 15, 2015.

Chasing 'the good life': Mobile industry logics in developing countries. International Communication Association (ICA) Mobile Pre-Conference, Seattle, WA, May 22, 2014.

A global south perspective on new regulatory initiatives and challenges: Ghana's Data Protection Act of 2012. International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Dublin, Ireland, June 27, 2013.

CSR positioning in Ghana. International Communication Association (ICA) CSR Pre-Conference, London, England, June 17, 2013.

Entrepreneurship as infrastructure: A contemporary look at Africa's communication technology industry. Beyond Normative Approaches: Everyday Media Culture in Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa, February 29, 2012.

The transnational dimensions of entrepreneurship and communication technologies in a globalized Africa. International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Istanbul, Turkey, July 14, 2011.

Global flows, media and developing democracies: The Ghanaian case. International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) Conference, Braga, Portugal, July 19, 2010.

'And to our listeners in London and New York': Online radio production and the globalization of local broadcast in Ghana. The Radio Conference: A Transnational Forum, Toronto, Canada, July 30, 2009.

#### **INVITED TALKS, PANELS & WORKSHOPS**

Race and the geopolitics of digital technology: Africa, China, and the US. Stanford University (Program in Science, Technology, and Society). March 3, 2021.

'I was still Black when he gave me \$200k': Transnational frictions, class, and the tech entrepreneurial life'. Stanford University (Center for African Studies & PACS). February 17, 2021.

The politics and economics of global AI: Chinese facial recognition in Zimbabwe [with Straube, T.]. Data and Society (Against Platform Determinism Workshop), January 14, 2021.

Panel on COVID-19 & Africa: Youth and closing the innovation gap. Harvard University (Center for African Studies). December 9, 2020.

Mapping contemporary (re)imaginings of a global black diaspora. Michigan State University (African Studies Center). November 12, 2020.

China, Africa, and the shifting worlds of tech labor. University of Pennsylvania (Center for Advanced Research in

Global Communication (CARGC). October 29, 2020.  
Infrastructure development. Yale-Africa-China Conference. Yale University (Political Science). Port Louis, Mauritius. [Scheduled for May 13, 2020, postponed due to pandemic]  
The hype and hope of African tech entrepreneurship. The World Bank. Washington DC. February 20, 2020.  
Survival innovation and the labors of tech entrepreneurship'. Goethe University Frankfurt (Human Geography). Frankfurt, Germany. December 18, 2019.  
Writing Workshop. Johns-Hopkins University (SAIS-CARI). Washington DC. October 11-12, 2019.  
Designing the south: Emerging accounts of technology, entrepreneurship, and collaboration between Africa and China. Harvard University (Center for African Studies/Africa-Asia Initiative). Cambridge, MA. October 8, 2019.  
Digital Civil Society Conference, Stanford University (Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society (PACS). Palo Alto, CA, November 30-October 2, 2019.  
Notes on survivability and the labor of tech entrepreneurship. Project on Entrepreneurship and Society at Stanford University (Graduate School of Business). Lake Tahoe, CA. August 22-25, 2019.  
Microsoft Faculty Summit: The future of work. Microsoft Research. Redmond, WA. July 16-18, 2019.  
Equals on an uneven playing field: Unpacking small scale Sino-African tech entrepreneurial collaborations. Lingnan University (Centre for Social Policy and Social Change), Hong Kong. May 9, 2019.  
Platform Economies Research Workshop. The New School (Platform Economies Research Group), New York, NY. May 3-4, 2019.  
Contestations of entrepreneurial labor between Ghana and China [with Silvia Lindtner]. The New School (The Graduate Institute for Design, Ethnography & Social Thought (GIDEST)), New York, NY. February 8, 2019.  
Reorienting tech transfer: Learning, exchange, and collaboration between African and Chinese tech entrepreneurs. Johns-Hopkins University (SAIS-CARI Conference). Washington, DC. April 16, 2019.  
Survivability & (re)defining innovation through transnational technology production. National University of Singapore (Communications & New Media). Singapore. July 3, 2018.  
Innovating to survive: African tech entrepreneurs and global discourse of technology production. University of Pennsylvania (Annenberg School). Philadelphia, PA. October 6, 2017.  
Effective online research for journalists iJourno Africa Workshop. Accra, Ghana, August 27, 2016.  
Technology discourse in contemporary Africa: Narratives, materials, and activities. University of Witwatersrand (Institute for Social & Economic Research)/Mellon Foundation/ University of Michigan. Workshop on Technology Studies in Africa. Durban, South Africa, July 14, 2016.  
Tech entrepreneurship in Africa: Views from Accra & Nairobi. barcamp: Building the Addis tech vision. xHub. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 5, 2016.  
Tech production culture and industry logics in Ghana. Michigan State University and University of Michigan ICTD mini-symposium. Ann Arbor, MI, October 30, 2015.  
Global flows and new media in West Africa: A case study. Point Sud Research Center. Workshop on Media Appropriations and Mediascapes in Sub-Saharan Africa. Bamako, Mali. January 7, 2011.

---

#### **WORKSHOPS & EVENTS ORGANIZED/CO-ORGANIZED**

Fostering historical research in Computer Supported Cooperative Work. November 2019. Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) Conference, Austin, Texas.  
Platform and data matters. Spring 2019. UMass, Amherst.  
China-Ghana Tech Collaborations. June 2018. Impact Hub, Accra, Ghana.

---

#### **TEACHING & MENTORING**

##### **Courses Taught**

Communication, Technology, and Work (Comm. 497 DL, U Mass Amherst), Fall 2018- current  
Global Media Flows (Comm. 397 GM, U Mass Amherst), Fall 2018 – Spring 2020

Views on the News [TA] (Comm. 261, University of Michigan), Winter 2014  
Media and Globalization [TA] (Comm. 355, University of Michigan), Fall 2013  
Media Processes and Effects [TA] (Comm. 102, University of Michigan), Winter 2011  
Media and Public Affairs [TA] (Comm. 361, University of Michigan), Spring 2011 & Fall 2010  
New Media and the Information Society [TA] (Comm. 458, University of Michigan), Winter 2010 & Fall 2009

### **Graduate Advising**

Alev Coban, Goethe University of Frankfurt, Human Geography – PhD Dissertation Committee, 2021 (Expected)  
Jacuelin Kataneksza, The New School, Public and Urban Policy – PhD Dissertation committee, 2021 (Expected)  
Alkim Yalin, UMass Amherst, Communication – PhD Plan of Study committee, 2019  
Lizhen Zhao, UMass Amherst, Communication – PhD Plan of Study committee, 2020  
Diana Kasem, UMass Amherst, Communication – PhD Independent study, 2020

### **Undergraduate Advising**

Gwladys Ngatchou Ndankam, UMass Amherst, Communication – Undergraduate Research, Spring 2019 – Spring 2020  
Matthew Berman, UMass Amherst, Communication – Undergraduate Research, Summer 2019; Independent Study, Spring 2020  
Maria Sohail, University of Michigan, Communication -- Undergraduate Research Opportunity (UROP) Fall 2012 – Winter 2013

### **Guest Lecturing**

First Year Seminar (Comm. 191, UMass Amherst), Fall 2020  
When China Comes to Town: Environment & the Politics of Development (DAAS, U of Michigan) Spring 2018  
Seminar in Global Media (JAMS 620, U of Wisconsin, Milwaukee), Fall 2017  
Computer Mediated Communication, (Comm. 423, U of Michigan), Fall 2015  
Communication Leadership (Comm. 597 F, U of Washington), Spring 2014

### **Pedagogy & Training**

Teaching Writing in the Disciplines (Sweetland Writing Center, U of Michigan), Fall 2010  
Teaching with Diversity Workshop (Center for Research on Learning and Teaching) Winter 2010  
Midterm Assessment Process (Center for Teaching & Learning, UMass) Fall 2019  
External Class Observation & Feedback (Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, U of Michigan) Fall 2009  
Instructor Training Program (Comm. 993, U of Michigan), Fall 2009

---

### **DOCTORAL STUDIES AWARDS**

ProQuest Dissertation Writing Award (2013): \$15,000  
Rackham Research Grant (2009, 2011): \$4,200  
Fund for Academic Excellence (2012): \$4,000  
Consortium on Media Policy Studies (COMPASS) (2009): \$6,000  
Rackham graduate & Communication studies travel funds (2010-2014): \$6,700  
Marsh Fellowship (2012): \$8,500  
Communication Spring/Summer Fellowship (2014): \$4,500  
LSA Regents Fellowship (2008): 2 years full funding, including tuition and stipend

---

### **SERVICE**

#### **University of Massachusetts, Amherst**

Events and Programming Committee, Communication, 2020-2021  
Website Consulting Committee, Communication, 2019-2020; 2020-2021

Artificial Intelligence/ Autonomous Systems & Future of Work Working Group, School of Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2019-2020  
Community, Climate, and Social Justice Committee, Communication, 2018-2019; 2019-2020

### **Editorial Work**

Co-editor, Dialogues, *Interactions Magazine*

### **Conference Planning**

Program Committee (Associate Chair- Design Sub-Committee), Association for Computing and Machinery (ACM) Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2020), June – December 2019  
Program Committee (Late Breaking Work), ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2017), January - February 2017  
Program Committee (Full Papers), Information Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD 2016 & 2017), December 2015 – June 2016; April – October 2017  
Program Committee (Notes), ACM African Conference for Human Computer Interaction (AfriCHI 2016), January – June 2016

### **Journal Reviewing**

*Global Perspectives*  
*Human Computer Interaction*  
*Information Technology & International Development (ITID)*  
*International Journal of Communication (IJOC)*  
*International Journal of Human Computer Interaction*  
*Interacting with Computers*  
*Journal of African Media Studies*  
*Journal of Chinese Economic & Business Studies*  
*Media, Culture & Society*  
*Media Industries*  
*Transactions of Computer Human Interaction (TOCHI)*  
*Political and Legal Anthropology Review (PoLAR)*

### **Conference Reviewing**

Association for Computing and Machinery (ACM) Conference on African Human Computer Interaction (AfriCHI)  
ACM Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (DIS)  
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)  
ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)  
International Communication Association (ICA)  
Information Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD)

---

### **PRESS/MEDIA & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The rise of Chinese tech in Africa. *The China-Africa Project*, 2019  
Huawei rides security concerns. *African Business Magazine*, 2018  
Inside Shenzhen's race to outdo Silicon Valley. *MIT Tech Review*, 2018  
Rethinking innovation. *Citi Trends, Citi FM*, 2018  
Hack, Make, Sell [with Chuma Asuzu]. *Africa is a Country: Digital Africa*, 2018  
Tech + Africa [co-founder and editor]  
    Meet Josh Opoku Agyemang. *Tech + Africa*. 2019  
    Meet an African maker/ tech entrepreneur. *Tech + Africa*. 2018  
    Why Tech + Africa. *Tech + Africa*. 2018  
Radio via Mobiles. *Distribution Matters*, 2017

---

**PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC ASSOCIATIONS**

African Studies Association (ASA)

Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) [Special Interest Group: Computer Human Interaction]

Chinese in Africa/Africans in China (CA/AC) Research Group

International Communication Association (ICA)

Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S)

---

**LANGUAGES**

English (Native), Ewe (Native), French (Working Proficiency), Akan (Working Proficiency), West African Pidgin

English (Working Proficiency), Mandarin (Elementary Proficiency)