

Lecture Series “Signatures of World Society”

in cooperation with the Working Group Sociology of the Media

Technocolonialism: When Technology for Good is Harmful

Mirca Madianou
(London)



© Mirca Madianou

Tuesday,
21 January 2024
6.15 p.m.
Room X-C3-107

With over 300 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, and with emergencies and climate disasters becoming more common, AI and data are being championed as forces for good and as solutions to the complex challenges of the aid sector. In this talk, based on her new book *Technocolonialism: When technology for good is harmful*, Mirca Madianou will argue that digital innovations such as biometrics and chatbots engender new forms of violence and entrench power asymmetries between the global South and North. Drawing on ten years of research on the uses of digital technologies in humanitarian operations, Madianou will unearth the colonial power relations that shape ‘technology for good’ initiatives. The notion of technocolonialism captures how the convergence of digital infrastructures with humanitarian bureaucracy, state power and market forces reinvigorates and reshapes colonial legacies. Technocolonialism shifts the attention to the constitutive role that digital infrastructures, data and AI play in accentuating inequities between aid providers and people in need.

This lecture will also be broadcast via Zoom
Meeting-ID: 674 3413 2155 – Passcode: 301974