ROUTLEDGE/ROUND TABLE STUDENTSHIP AWARDS
APPLICATION FORM 2024-25

Please return to: secretary@commonwealthroundtable.co.uk by 31 July 2024.

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Title: **Ms**

Your preferred name: Theshaya

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Phone number: ***: +27 72 576 3313***

Nationality:
South African

Current university:
University of Kwazulu Natal (Applied, Pending Admission)

Year of study: ***2024 - 2026***

PhD/DPhil subject area and provisional thesis title: PhD, **Songs of Dalit Assertion: Culture, identity and Politics**

Are you a Chevening/Commonwealth Scholarship Commission alumnus?

No

Summarise your proposed research topic for the Routledge/Round Table Studentship awards (100-
400 words):

Transformative climate justice is an emerging area of research that deals with the disruption of the existing power equations involved in climate change policies, leading toward an inclusive decision-making process through a bottom-up approach (Newell, et. al, 2020). In contrast, communication about climate justice in India predominantly follows a top-down approach, marginalizing the voices of communities most affected by climate change. (Belfer et al., 2017). Many start-ups in India are challenging this dominant paradigm through solution-focused community media, inclusive of the perceptions of climate justice by those affected by climate change. This form of journalism aligns with the growing scholarship on evolving models of climate reporting which provides greater agency to citizens and

emphasizes impact-oriented journalism (Trionfi, 2023). However, community media in India lack recognition in the public sphere, with their journalists marginalized within the hierarchical structure of journalism (Thakur, 2024). This research aims to study the role, values, processes, challenges and potential of community media outlets toward transformative climate justice. Simultaneously, this project aims to map community media outlets in India within the climate reporting landscape as a form of solution-oriented journalism that challenges dominant paradigms of climate communication. Inspired by action-oriented participatory research, a field of research that adds to the knowledge base and at the same time contributes to local communities (Worthington et al., 2011), this project aims to map the theoretical foundation of community media based on their role and potential while aiming to enhance their effectiveness as agents of climate justice through an iterative process involving consultation, consensus, possibility of an experiment and refinement.

Summarise your intended outcomes if you are successful in applying for an award (100-400 words):

Law

By addressing the emerging challenges posed by neurotechnology, this research aims to strengthen South Africa's legal framework. The development of comprehensive legal and ethical guidelines for the use of brain data will ensure that the legal system remains robust and adaptive to technological advancements, thus protecting individual rights and enhancing the reliability of neuroscientific evidence in courts.

Medical And Health Disciplines

Neurotechnology has significant implications in the context of the diagnosis and treatment of neurological disorders. Consequently, this research will facilitate the ethical development of these technologies, and mitigate misappropriation, while promoting advancements that can lead to improved health outcomes, specifically in the context of mental health and neurological care

Job Creation

Neurotechnology is becoming increasingly integrated into mainstream society, and hence this research supports the creation of new jobs in legal, ethical, and technological fields, facilitating the growth of industries related to neurotechnology, contributing to economic development and job opportunities.

Poverty Alleviation

Neurotechnological advancements facilitates equitable access, and hence this research can contribute to poverty alleviation. From a broader perspective, the outcomes of ethical neurotechnology can enhance productivity and quality of life, particularly for disadvantaged communities, thus supporting economic empowerment.

Transformation

By promoting inclusivity and equitable access to neurotechnology, this research seeks to ensure that all citizens benefit from advancements in neurotechnology, thus contributing to social justice and national transformation efforts.

Human & Social Dynamics

Provide insights that can inform policies and programs aimed at social development, thus enhancing that comprehension of how neurotechnological advancements affect individuals on a cognitive level, this research will enhance understanding and contribute to fairer, more accurate judicial processes, ultimately supporting a more just and equitable society.

Global Change

The research addresses the global implications of neurotechnology by contributing to international discourse on ethical standards, legal frameworks, and human rights protections. It examines the cross-border challenges and opportunities associated with neurotechnology, and advocates for international cooperation and the harmonization of legal standards to manage brain data privacy and ethical use. Engagement in global dialogues and the proposition of mechanisms for international treaties and agreements, facilitates South Africa's participation in shaping the future of neurotechnology, thus positioning the country as a leader in addressing the ethical and legal complexities of neurotechnology which fosters a global environment where innovation can thrive alongside robust human rights protections.

STISA 2024

By promoting the responsible development and integration of cutting-edge neurotechnology within a robust ethical and legal framework, this research aligns with the goals of STISA 2024. It addresses unique challenges associated with brain data privacy and neuro ethics, thus

supporting regional goals of fostering innovation and technological advancement. Hence, this research promotes the progression of neurotechnology in a manner that is both sustainable and ethical. This will enhance Africa's competitive edge in the global technological landscape while protecting human rights and promoting socio-economic development.

Reduced Inequalities

This research aims to mitigate discrimination based on neurological information, thus fostering equitable access to neurotechnology, and protecting marginalized communities from misappropriation and exploitation which aims to contribute to reducing societal inequalities.

Partnership & Goal

By advocating for international cooperation and the harmonization of legal frameworks, this research reflects South Africa’s goals of fostering global partnerships. By contributing to the knowledge base of international treaties and agreements on brain privacy, it promotes collaborative efforts to address neurotechnology's challenges.

Good Health & Well – being

The research emphasizes the ethical use of neurotechnology in enhancing mental and neurological health, contributing to overall well-being. By proposing guidelines for the safe and effective use of these technologies, it supports public health initiatives and promotes healthier communities.

Summarise the likely impact of your research and why you think it is important (100-400 words):

The proposed research addresses critical and timely issues at the intersection of technology and the law by evaluating the ethical, legal, and societal consequences of neurotechnology, a rapidly advancing field with the potential to transform various aspects of human life. The impact of this research will be multifaceted, influencing various stakeholders and contributing to the broader discourse on technology and human rights.

As neurotechnology becomes more integrated into everyday life, the collection and use of brain data raise significant concerns about privacy, consent, and autonomy. Consequently, this

research aims to inform the development of legal frameworks and policies that ensure brain data is collected, stored, and used ethically and responsibly. By proposing robust protections for individuals, this work aims to prevent the misappropriation of brain data and protect fundamental human rights, thus benefiting society. Similarly, this research will have a substantial impact on policymakers and regulators who are tasked with overseeing the development and deployment of neurotechnology. Through the identification of gaps in existing legal frameworks and proposing comprehensive solutions, this research will provide valuable insights that influence policy decisions. This will inform the formulation of regulations that balance innovation with ethical consideration, thus ensuring that neurotechnology is developed in a manner that is both scientifically progressive and socially responsible. This will encourage more effective governance of emerging technologies. In the context of the practical application of these technologies, this research will serve as a guide for best ethical practices and guidelines for developers and companies that will help these stakeholders navigate the complex landscape of brain data usage, thus enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of neurotechnology companies, and further encouraging them to prioritize human rights in their innovation processes. Thus, fostering a more ethical and socially conscious technology industry.
Further, through the exploration of brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) and brain data in legal contexts, this research will have a profound impact on legal practitioners, judges, and policymakers by providing clarity on the admissibility and reliability of neuroscientific evidence in court, thus informing the use of brain data in legal proceedings and contributing to fairer and more accurate judicial outcomes.

Summarise how the award would benefit your research (100-400 words):

The award would enable me to access specialised archives and databases that house crucial legal and historical documents related to my research areas, providing a deeper understanding of existing frameworks and their application to neurotechnology. Funding could be allocated to purchase or access advanced tools and software necessary for analysing brain data privacy issues, ensuring a comprehensive and technologically informed approach.

The award would facilitate networking opportunities with experts and researchers in Commonwealth studies, allowing me to collaborate and exchange ideas with those working on similar topics or in related fields. Attending and presenting at conferences and workshops organized by Routledge and The Round Table would provide valuable feedback on my research, fostering academic discourse and potentially influencing policy recommendations.

By tailoring my research to address specific challenges faced by Commonwealth countries regarding neurotechnology and human rights, the award would help highlight the importance of harmonising legal frameworks across these nations. The research could contribute to developing policies and legal standards that protect human rights while promoting innovation, providing a model for other countries within the Commonwealth.

Being recognized by such esteemed organisations would enhance my academic credentials, increasing the visibility and impact of my research. The recognition and support from the award would open up opportunities for collaboration with international organisations and think tanks focused on human rights and technology, aligning with my career goals of working within international policy and advocacy spheres.

By exploring how Commonwealth countries can create innovative legal frameworks that balance technological advancement with human rights protection, my research would contribute valuable insights to Commonwealth studies. Incorporating diverse perspectives from various Commonwealth countries would enrich my research, highlighting cultural, legal, and ethical differences in approaching neurotechnology issues.

Name of proposed mentor: **Donrich Thaldar; Full professor of law at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, where he chairs the Health Law & Ethics Research Interest Group. He is currently principal investigator of an NIH-funded project that investigates the legal aspects of data science in health innovation in Africa.**

University of proposed mentor: University of Kwazulu Natal

E-mail of proposed mentor: ThaldarD@ukzn.ac.za

Name of proposed mentor: Dr Marietjie Botes

University of proposed mentor: SnT Interdisciplinary Centre for Security, Reliability Security and Trust, University of Luxembourg

Email of proposed mentor: marietjiebotes1@gmail.com

Name of referee 1 (your current supervisor): Prof Donrich Thaldar

E-mail address of referee 1 (your current supervisor): ThaldarD@ukzn.ac.za

Name of referee 2: Dr Paul Ogendi

E-mail address of referee 2: paulogendi@gmail.com

Relationship of referee 2 to you: Co - supervisor (LLM)