Studying geopolitical conflicts through social media analysis and GIS applications

Dr Abrahams will deliver a presentation in two parts, the first one more addressed at data scientists, the second more targeted at regional scientists. In the first part of his presentation, Dr Abrahams will present his ongoing efforts to identify fake social media accounts currently operating in the Arabian Gulf. He will discuss the theoretical framing of the problem as it relates to the phenomena of censorship, propaganda, disinformation, and fake news, as well as the technical challenges of applying machine learning algorithms to this research topic. In the second part, Dr Abrahams will showcase his research on the Palestinian West Bank, where he has used census data and nighttime lights imagery to evaluate the impacts on the Palestinian economy of Israeli security checkpoints and roadblocks. Dr Abrahams will emphasize the challenges of framing a research question that has significant economic and political dimensions. He will also detail the GIS and econometric challenges to performing such analysis.