

# Aman K. Gebru

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## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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<b>DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW</b> , Pittsburgh, PA Assistant Professor of Law Member, Faculty Senate's Racial and Ethnic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Member, Dean's Diversity Action Council Primary law school representative, Institutional Review Board Member, Admissions Committee Faculty Advisor, Duquesne Intellectual Property Law Association	2019 – Present
<b>YESHIVA UNIVERSITY CARDOZO SCHOOL OF LAW</b> , New York, NY Visiting Assistant Professor	2017 – 2019
<b>NEW YORK UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW</b> , New York, NY Post-Doctoral Global Fellow Affiliate, Engelberg Center on Innovation Law & Policy	Spring 2017
<b>HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW</b> , Dire Dawa, Ethiopia Instructor (teaching and research) Director, Social Justice Center (2010 – 2011): established legal aid centers in Eastern Ethiopia Awards, Junior Faculty Research Grant; coached two national award-winning moot court teams	2008 – 2011

## COURSES TAUGHT

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Property Law I & II (Duquesne)  
Contracts I & II (Cardozo)  
Fundamentals of Intellectual Property Law (Duquesne and University of Ontario)  
Patent Law (Cardozo)  
Patents and Technology Transfer (Haramaya)  
Copyright Law (Duquesne)  
Copyright and Trademark Law (Duquesne)  
International Intellectual Property Law (Cardozo)  
Environmental Law (Haramaya)  
Public International Law (Haramaya)  
International Humanitarian Law (Haramaya)  
Common Law Reasoning and Legal Systems (Toronto)

## EDUCATION

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<b>UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF LAW</b> , Doctor of Juridical Sciences (S.J.D) Dissertation: <i>Intellectual Property, Traditional Knowledge, and Bioprospecting: Searching for Efficient Balance of Rights</i> Committee: Ariel Katz, Michael Trebilcock, Mariana Prado, Ruth Okediji, Kerry Rittich	2012 – 2017
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Honors: Graduate Fellow in Innovation Law and Policy; Nathan Strauss Q.C. Graduate Fellow; Doctoral Scholarship Recipient, International Law Program of the Center for International Governance Innovation

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF LAW, Master of Laws (LL.M.) 2011 – 2012

Honors: Spirit of Excellence Award (for academic success and leadership excellence)

HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW, Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.), *with honors* 2003 – 2008

Honors: Runner-up Award (national round), Phillip C. Jessup Int. Moot Court Competition  
Runner-up Award (international round), International Humanitarian Law Moot Court Competition (International Committee of the Red Cross)

## SCHOLARSHIP

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## CURRENT RESEARCH

**Biodiversity and Biopiracy:** In this book chapter (Intellectual Property Excesses, 2021 Hart Publications), I analyze abuses of intellectual property rights; particularly, patent applicants that claim ownership rights over the traditional know-how of indigenous and local communities by withholding information from patent offices about the sources of their inventions. The book chapter uses, as one example among many, a Dutch patent granted over a process of making *teff flour*—a staple food in Ethiopian and Eritrean cultures that has been consumed for centuries.

**The Piracy Paradox and Traditional Cultural Expressions:** The “piracy paradox” is a highly influential theory claiming that the fashion industry benefits from piracy rather than being adversely affected by it: copying of designer fashion fuels the persistent demand for new designs, which in turn encourages creativity. In this invited forthcoming publication, I examine if the “piracy paradox” applies in the context of copying of traditional cultural expressions (those of indigenous people and local communities), which are sometimes labeled “cultural appropriation”.

**Owning Collective Innovation:** Intellectual property laws were designed with individual inventors in mind; however, innovation has become increasingly collective in nature. Who should own intellectual property rights over collectively developed innovation? Should there even be any form of exclusive right? This empirical project uses hackathons (innovation competitions) as a case study to examine who should own collective innovation—individual contributors, host companies, or the public.

## LAW REVIEW ARTICLES

The Piracy Paradox and Traditional Cultural Expressions, 38 CARDOZO ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT LAW JOURNAL \_\_\_\_ (Forthcoming 2021) (invited)

[Patents, Disclosure, & Biopiracy](#) 96 DENVER LAW REVIEW 535 (2019)

- Reviewed by Professor Sarah Burstein for JOTWELL (Journal of Things We Like Lots) with the title “How to Thwart Biopiracy” (January 2021); assigned reading in Professor Burstein’s patent law class
- Reviewed by Professor Camilla Hrdy for the Written Description Blog with the title “Compelling Disclosure of Traditional Knowledge in Patents” (September 2018)

- Selected citation, Chidi Oguamanam, Understanding African and like-Minded Countries' Positions at WIPO-IGC, 60 IDEA 386 (2020)
- Selected citation, Monique S. J. Simmonds et al., Biodiversity and Patents: Overview of Plants and Fungi Covered by Patents, 367 PLANTS, PEOPLE, PLANET 546 (2020)

[Intellectual Property Law and Bioprospecting: A Model Legal Framework](#), 19 NORTH CAROLINA JOURNAL OF LAW & TECHNOLOGY 257 (2017)

[The Global Protection of Traditional Knowledge: Searching for the Minimum Consensus](#), 17 JOHN MARSHALL REVIEW OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW 42 (2017)

- Selected Citation, Lee C. Rarrick, Biodiversity Impacts of Investment and Free Trade Agreements, 37 PACE ENVTL. L. REV. 67 (2019)
- Selected Citation, Naira Rezende Simmons, Putting Yourself in the Shoes of a Patent Examiner: Overview of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) Patent Examiner Production (Count) System, 17 JOHN MARSHALL REV. INTELL. PROP. L. 32 (2017)

[Intellectual Property Law and the Protection of Traditional Knowledge: From Cultural Conservation to Knowledge Codification](#), 15 ASPER REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS & TRADE LAW 293 (2015) (peer-reviewed)

- Selected Citation, Julien Chaisse, The Merging of Two Worlds: Cyber Law and Trade Law Normative Convergence on Internet Domain Names, 37 B.U. INT'L L.J. 281 (2019)
- Selected Citation, James Ming Chen, The Fragile Menagerie: Biodiversity Loss, Climate Change, and the Law, 93 IND. L.J. 303 (2018)
- Reviewed, Slaw Magazine, [Geburu on Protecting Traditional Knowledge Through Sui Generis IP Law](#) (March 3, 2016)
- Quoted, Canadian Lawyer Magazine, [IP Back to the Future](#) (June 6, 2016)

[Environmental Permitting in Ethiopia: No restraint on "Unstoppable Growth?"](#), 1 HARAMAYA LAW REVIEW 73 (2012) (with James Krueger & Inqu Asnake) (peer-reviewed)

#### BOOK CHAPTERS

Biopiracy and Biodiversity Protection: The Case of Teff Flour Patents, in INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY EXCESSES (Enrico Bonadio and Aislinn O'Connell, eds.) (Hart Publishing, Oxford, Forthcoming 2021)

#### OTHER SELECTED WRITINGS

[Toward Legal Recognition of Traditional Knowledge as Intellectual Property](#), 7 Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage, 7 Desired Futures Newsletter 12 (2016)

[Analyzing the Controversial Claim for Contributory Trademark Dilution](#), Seattle Trademark Lawyer (2012)

[Large Scale Acquisitions of Land in Ethiopia](#), Focus on Land in Africa, World Resource Institute and Landesa (2012) (with Darryl Vhugen)

## MEDIA

*Interviewed*, The Scientist journal about balancing restrictions on access to biodiversity and traditional (indigenous) knowledge with scientific research (December 17, 2020)

*Interviewed*, [WESA 90.5](#) about a dispute involving the destruction of a community mural and potential violation of the Federal Virtual Artists Rights Act (VARA) (July 25, 2020)

*Interviewed (Amharic)*, [Adebabay Media](#) about international legal issues related to the Nile dam dispute between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia

*Interviewed*, Brian L. Frye, [Aman Gebru on Traditional Knowledge as Prior Art](#), *Ipse Dixit* podcast, Season 1, Ep. 155 (February 17, 2019)

## OTHER ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**ADDIS LAW GROUP LLP** Spring 2019  
Legal consultant, provided legal consultation on international patent law issues

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, FACULTY OF LAW** 2012 – 2016  
Instructor (Fall 2016)  
Thesis advisor to LL.M. students  
Researcher, Center for Innovation Law and Policy (2013-2016), organized academic events and wrote grant proposals  
Guest lecturer, Master of Biotechnology Program, Legal Frameworks for the Bioprospecting Industry

**CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE INNOVATION, INTERNATIONAL LAW RESEARCH PROGRAM** Fall 2016  
Research assistant, wrote policy briefs on intellectual property law issues

**UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES** Fall 2013  
Adjunct Professor, Intellectual Property Law & Policy

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS INITIATIVE – AFRICA** Summers 2012 – 17  
Lecturer, Current Issues in Intellectual Property Law

**UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA** Fall 2008  
Legal assistant, researched international criminal law issues (genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity) for the Office of the Prosecutor’s *Butare* Team prosecuting Pauline Nyiramasuhuko—former Rwandese Minister for Family Welfare—and five defendants.

## SELECTED CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

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*Guest lecturer*, “Introduction to Intellectual Property Law” University of Pittsburgh School of Law (February 2021)

*Organizer and panelist*, “Intellectual Property, Race, and Culture,” Annual Meeting of Southeastern Association of Law Schools (July 2021)

*Organizer and host*, “Fourth Annual Three Rivers Intellectual Property and Technology Law Colloquium,” in partnership with Michael Madison, University of Pittsburgh School of Law (January 2021)

*Guest Lecturer* (invited), “Patents and Biodiversity Beyond National Borders,” University of Toronto Department of Political Science (November 2020)

*Panelist*, “Intellectual Property Ownership of Collectively Developed Innovation,” Stanford University School of Law, Intellectual Property Scholars Conference (July 2020)

*Panelist* (invited), “Racism, Justice, and Your Fall Classes,” Association of American Law Schools, Faculty Focus webinar series (June 2020)

*Panelist*, “Sports Contracts versus the Coronavirus: Force Majeure Provisions in NBA, MLB, & NFL Sports Contracts,” Duquesne University School of Law (April 2020)

*Panelist*, “Norm Breakers: Intellectual Property in Hackathons”  
Third Annual Three Rivers Intellectual Property and Technology Law Workshop (2020)  
Association of American Law Schools Annual Conference (2020)  
Future Law Conference, Duquesne University School of Law (2019)

*Panelist* (invited), “Owning Hackathons: Intellectual Property Issues in Collaborative Innovation,” 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Intellectual Property Scholars Roundtable, University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law (2019)

*Panelist*, “Owning Hackathons,” Mid-Atlantic Patent Works-In-Progress, American University, Washington College of Law (2019)

*Panelist* (invited), “The TRIPs Agreements and The Convention on Biological Diversity,” TRIPs Agreement at 25 Symposium, Texas A&M University School of Law (2019)

*Panelist*, “Inclusive Innovation: Rethinking Reward in Sequential Innovation,” 4th National People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, American University Washington College of Law (2019)

*Invited speaker*, “Patents, Disclosure, and Biopiracy,” St. John’s University School of Law, Intellectual Property Law Center (2019)

**Keynote Speaker**, “The Legal Protection of Traditional Knowledge,” Cultural Appropriation and Traditional Knowledge Conference, University of Toronto Faculty of Law (2018)

*Invited speaker*, “Patents, Disclosure, and Biopiracy,” George Washington University Intellectual Property Speaker Series (2018)

*Panelist*, “Patents, Disclosure, and Biopiracy”  
Law and Society Annual Meeting (2018)  
Junior Intellectual Property Scholars Association Workshop, Northwestern University (2018)  
Southeastern Association of Law Schools Conference (2018)  
Intellectual Property Scholars Conference, University of Berkeley (2018)

*Panelist*, “A Knowledge Commons Framework for Governance of Bioprospecting,” Tri-state IP Law Workshop, NYU School of Law (2018)

*Panelist*, “Challenges in the Intellectual Property Protection of Traditional Knowledge: Searching for Solutions Using Proprietary and Open-Innovation Concepts,” NYU Law Hauser Program Workshop (2017)

*Panelist*, “Intellectual Property, Bioprospecting, and Traditional Medicinal Knowledge: A Potential Framework for Protection”

Works-In-Progress in Intellectual Property Law Conference (2017)

Intellectual Property Scholars Conference (2017)

*Panelist*, “Intellectual Property and Traditional Knowledge: An Examination through the 'Public Goods' Framework,” Canadian Law and Economics Association Conference (2016)

*Panelist*, “From Common Goods to Public Goods: The Effects of Legal Intervention on Codification of Traditional Knowledge” Canadian Law and Society Association Conference (2015)

## GRANTS

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New York University School of Law post-doctoral scholarship grant - \$15,250 (2017)

Doctoral scholarship from the Center for International Governance Innovation, a think-tank based in Waterloo, Ontario - 48,000 CAD (~ 37,625 USD) (2015 and 2016)

University of Toronto Faculty of Law, Graduate Fellowship in Innovation Law and Policy and the Nathan Strauss Q.C. Graduate Fellowship - 160,550 CAD (~126,000 USD) (2012 – 2017)

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission grant, Haramaya University Social Justice Center - \$9,000 (2011)

Junior Faculty Research Grant, Haramaya University - \$1,250 (2010)

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTERNAL SERVICE

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**PROJECT 3541** 2021 – Present  
Advisory board member of a photo archival and memory project led by a 2020 Booker Prize nominee, Maaza Mengiste, to reclaim the history of the Second Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1941

**ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS** 2020 – Present  
Treasurer, Africa Section

**OUTREACH TECHNOLOGY INC.** 2020 – Present  
Board member of a California based non-profit committed to utilizing technology to bring peace and stability in developing countries

**ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX TEWAHEDO CHURCH GLOBAL OUTREACH** 2020 – Present  
Chair of the Legal Committee to a non-profit organization tasked with addressing socio-economic pressures and mass atrocities committed against ethnic and religious minorities in parts of Ethiopia

**KEDIST SELASSIE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX TEWAHEDO CHURCH** 2019 – Present

Board member of a Pittsburgh-based non-profit and church established to create a community of support for immigrants, diaspora and others with ties to East Africa

**OHWOV! MEDIA SHARING START-UP**

2019 – Present

Advisory board member of a media sharing start-up company supported by Stanford University