

Knowledge Dependencies and the Un/Making of Equitable Futures

18 & 19 September 2025, University of Bonn | Venue: IDOS, Tulpenfeld 6, 53113 Bonn

Jointly hosted by the Bonn Centre for Dependency and Slavery Studies ([BCDSS](#)), University of Bonn & the German Institute of Development and Sustainability ([IDOS](#)), Bonn

Keynote speakers: **Dr. Lisa Tilley** (SOAS, University of London) & **Prof. AbdouMaliq Simone** (University of Sheffield & the University of Turin, online)

Amid escalating geopolitical instability, authoritarian retrenchments, and the deepening securitisation of knowledge-making, this conference critically examines how entrenched knowledge dependencies continue to shape practices of future-making—and how more equitable futures might still be (re)imagined. From the weaponisation of AI to the erosion of indigenous, activist, and academic freedoms, and the constraints of donor-driven agendas, we ask: How is knowledge circulation mediated? Under what conditions have alternative epistemic futures emerged—in the *longue durée* and within present formations?

Bridging the humanities, critical social sciences, and interdisciplinary fields, we invite scholars, artists, activists, policy actors, practitioners and more to explore how knowledge dependencies—whether structural, relational, or extractive—determine which visions of the future become possible and which remain foreclosed. In particular, the conference interrogates dominant epistemic hierarchies, tracing how methodologies such as co-creation and participatory research may, at times, reinforce rather than dismantle dependencies. Moreover, how might shrinking spaces for decolonial critique, radical imagination, and transnational solidarities shape knowledge futures?

While holding space for deep and reflexive conversations, we are particularly interested in tracing **lived experiences** through case studies and situated narratives. We seek to weave together themes often examined in isolation, including:

- The iterative nature of future-making and knowledge politics;
- The epistemic privilege of transnational networks and the mobility of certain knowledge-holders;
- Spatio-temporal inequities that determine what counts as “knowledge” and which knowledge practices are deemed necessary and urgent;
- Structural pushbacks against diversity and inclusion, including the deepening institutionalisation of knowledge dependencies through multiscalar modes of governance and donor-driven agendas.

Foregrounding the processual, we also seek generative interventions, engaging speculative and experimental approaches that rupture dominant epistemic structures, routines, and practices. How then might we move beyond critique alone to actively enact more plural, just, and transformative knowledge futures?

Join us in critically rethinking how knowledge dependencies shape, constrain, and create openings for both dominant and alternative modes of future-making.

Submission Guidelines

We welcome contributions in diverse formats, including traditional papers, performances, interactive dialogues and more, leading to a themed multimodal special issue.

- Presentation/paper, performance, and other multimodal abstracts & interventions (150–300 words)
- Open or closed panel proposals (500–1,000 words)

Please email submissions, along with a brief bio, to rsiriwar@uni-bonn.de by **May 25, 2025**. Organisers:
Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa, Anna-Katharina Hornidge, Sarah Dusend & Dima Al-Munajed