

DIVERSITY: Why Dependency and Slavery Studies Matter

At the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) humanities and social science researchers from more than 25 countries explore the phenomenon of slavery and other forms of strong asymmetrical dependencies. Our inclusive approach opens up new perspectives on social dependencies across all time periods, cultural contexts, and geographic locations. This poster showcases exemplary research by four of our PhD candidates.

“How Come There’re No ‘Brothers’ on the Wall of Fame?”

My dissertation explores Spike Lee’s cinematic representation of the legacy of slavery in current U.S. social relations. His classic film *Do the Right Thing* (1989) depicts the symbolic struggles among dominated groups—mainly Blacks and Italian Americans—in New York City.

The struggle over the admission of Blacks to a local pizzeria’s Italian American wall of fame highlights one of the key questions raised in Lee’s works: How does systemic racism continue to operate in a neoliberal society that celebrates diversity?

Luvena Kopp, Researcher at the BCDSS



Enduring Antagonisms - Spanish Gypsies in History

Ever since the proclamation in 1499 of a Royal Decree compelling Spanish *gitanos* to find ‘a known trade’ and ‘bind themselves to a lord’ on pain of being expelled, this social group has created a refractory culture of resistance that places them on the margins of Spanish society.

In my research I explore the effects of the Royal Decree and similar laws: I look at royal dictums, cultural practices and mechanism of discrimination in the history of Spain likely to have prevented the social inclusion of *gitanos*, and contributed to the creation of this minority as an imagined antagonist group.

Susana Macías Pascua, Researcher at the BCDSS



‘Slavery’ in Selected Narratives of Nineteenth - Century Recaptured West Africans

My research aims at giving a voice to and bringing out of obscurity the narratives of nineteenth-century recaptured West Africans, whose life stories have been forgotten in the archives. What can these narratives about the experiences of West Africans before and after being set free from European slave ships tell us about slavery(ies) and asymmetrical dependency(ies)? And how were these writings discursively constructed? These questions have led me to reflect on and find out how (re)presentations of slavery and other forms of unfreedom in these writings address issues such as social relations, power dynamics and agency.

My research will explore the autobiographies, biographies, letters, and testimonies of the captives, with the aim of finding answers to these questions.

Mary Aderonke Afolabi-Adeolu, Researcher at the BCDSS



Female Slave Owners and Enslaved Women: Voices from the Roman Household

My project sheds light on the relationships between slaves and women: two groups that Roman society, characterized by both slavery and patriarchy, labelled as ‘others’. They were regarded as ambiguous outsiders, potentially dangerous, yet indispensable for the smooth running of the house. But what happened when a slave was also a woman and her enslaver was a female slaveholder?

My research analyses the female face of slavery and slaveholding power, focusing on the relations between women of different status that shaped the Roman domestic hierarchy. In order to delineate this aspect of the household’s daily life, I draw on Roman inscriptions, which uniquely convey the voices of ancient women – both free and slave.

Giulia Cappucci, Researcher at the BCDSS

