

Working Groups at the BCDSS

Terminologies of Asymmetrical Dependencies

Aim

How do we handle terminologies of asymmetrical dependencies that appear in our sources? We propose that we need to be careful when adopting the terms used for certain practices and social relations in the textual sources we work with (like “slave,” “servant,” etc). Consequently, we first need to disentangle the meanings of our source’s terms within their own time and context. In a second step, we need to look for analytical vocabulary that moves us beyond the language of our sources and allows for comparisons. To this end, we explore a broad range of theories and methods from various disciplines.

What we do

We meet every 4-6 weeks to exchange ideas about different interdisciplinary approaches and learn about each other’s research. While we circulate readings beforehand that form the basis of our discussion, we follow a very hands-on practical approach to these texts: we seek to test the applicability of theories and methods to our own research. We do this through “writing exercises:” participants are asked to upload 2-3 pages ahead of the meeting, where they ponder if and how the proposed approach(es) are applicable to their own research. By doing this, we also learn about each other’s research and test out the value of theoretical and methodological models in an interdisciplinary setting.

Each session focuses on a specific methodological and/or theoretical problem or approach and is organized by one or several of the participants. Everyone can make suggestions for future sessions at any point. The session organizers select a maximum of 60 pages of text (= c. 1-3 texts). The participants agree to read these pages and write a short reflection on the contents and how they relate to their own research (2-3 pages). These “writing exercises” are uploaded to the corresponding sciebo folder in advance.

Coordination: [Jeannine Bischoff](#), [Jutta Wimpler](#), Pia Holste

Who: All interested BCDSS members and MA students are welcome! BCDSS Fellows are especially invited to join.

Contact: Pia Holste, pia.holste@dependency.uni-bonn.de