

# Data, Knowledge, and North Korean Scholarship

December 2, 2024, 4:45 - 6:15 pm  
Sinology Conference Room  
Hof 2, Entrance 2.3, AAKH Campus  
(adjacent to the EcoS Office, 2F-O1-27A)



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Prof. Hazel Smith

A common assumption is that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), is a knowledge black hole despite the fact a considerable amount of knowledge exists. Fundamental principles of knowledge, understood as 'justified true belief' arrived at via the scientific method, have received scant attention in North Korean studies, which have thus handicapped in defending the special value of scientific knowledge. Scholarship has been displaced and undermined by the epistemologically much weaker but more agile domain of information. The project draws on philosophy of knowledge literature and my thirty years of research on North Korea's socio-economy to make the claim that epistemology matters; to scholarship and policy makers. As Imre Lakatos warns, 'If we can have no securely based knowledge claims, then 'truth lies in power'. This project reclaims fundamental principles of knowledge as recursively necessary (if not sufficient) for the constitution of robust North Korean scholarship and policy.

**Hazel Smith** is a Professorial Research Associate in Korean Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and has researched East Asian Security and North Korea for over 30 years. She is regularly called on to advise governments and has lived in North Korea where she worked for United Nations humanitarian organisations for two years and from where she earned a (still valid) North Korean driving license.