Knowledge justice on the internet: Different ways of knowing and doing

Anasuya Sengupta & Kira Allmann

ANASUYA

Co-director & co-founder of Whose Knowledge?

Experience

- Former Chief Grantmaking Officer at the Wikimedia Foundation
- Former Regional Program Director at the Global Fund for Women
- 2017 Shuttleworth Foundation Fellow

Education

- MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Oxford, where she studied as a Rhodes Scholar
- BA in Economics (Honours) from Delhi University

We are more than our CVs!
...maker and breaker of pots and poems, yoga contortionist

KIRA

Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Media Law & Policy, University of Oxford

Experience

- Former Communications Lead at Whose Knowledge?
- Communications Director at the Oxford Human Rights Hub

Education

- DPhil in Oriental Studies (Islamic World), University of Oxford, as a Rhodes Scholar
- MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies, University of Oxford
- BA in Government and Linguistics, the College of William and Mary (Virginia)

We are more than our CVs!
Ukulelist-in-training and poetry dabbler

Whose Knowledge?

KNOWLEDGE INFRASTRUCTURES

Who is online?

50% of the world is now online

75% from the Global South (Asia and the Pacific Islands, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East)

48% of women are online; men are 21% more likely to be online (on avg.)

Who builds our network infrastructures?

Gender & Race...

- 5% of leadership positions in the technology sector are held by women
- USA: women hold only 25% of computing roles; of that 25%, only 5% are Asian women, 3% are Black, and 1% are Hispanic
- Only 6% of technical workers at Apple are Black (even fewer at Facebook and Google)

Who builds our network infrastructures?

Geography & Gender...

- Vast majority of documents published by the IETF originate in North America and Europe
- At the last in-person IETF meeting, only 6 attendees from Africa (out of 1,108)
- At the last ICANN meeting (2019), only 27% of participants were women

The internet does not look like many of us...

Participatory Design in Network Infrastructure

Community networks...

- Connect the unconnected
- Invite local participation
- Reimagine relationship between people and infrastructures

Broadband for the Rural North (B4RN)

Rural Lancashire, UK

Image: Kira Allmann

Participatory Design in Network Infrastructure

Zenzeleni Network (South Africa)

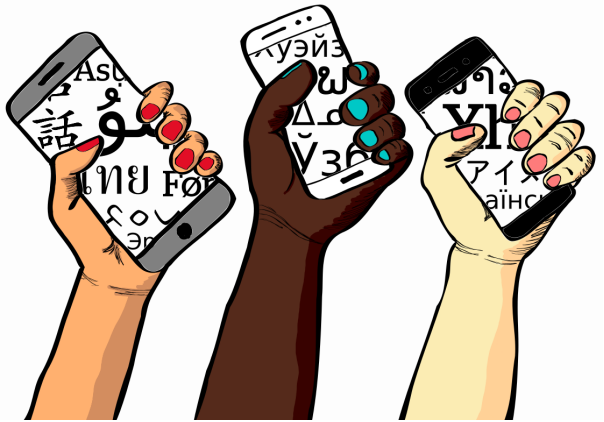
Rural Eastern Cape

Image: The Conversation

Language as knowledge infrastructure

- Seeing language as a proxy for knowledge
- Creating a truly multilingual internet
- Embodying multiple forms of knowledge

The State of the Internet's Languages report (later this year!)



- Showing numbers and experience
- Mapping challenges and opportunities
- Suggesting a practical agenda(s) for action

KNOWLEDGE INJUSTICES

Whose knowledge?

130 million books in 480 languages

There are 7000+ languages in the world

~7% of the world’s knowledge is in books

Whose knowledge?

Most online content (websites): English (59.3%) Russian (8.3%). Users: English (25.9%), Chinese (19.4%).

Most scholarly (incl. digital) publications in English

80% of scientific journals, 90% of social science journals on Scopus and JSTOR in English

Whose knowledge in the UK?

140 Black professors (0.7% from 21,000; 18,000 white, 1360 Asian, 2000 other)

68% of all professors are white men (>14,000), 0.1% are Black women (25)

1.2% of 19,868 UKRI studentships for Black or Black Mixed students (Black students make up 6.6% of further ed students)

75 Black governors on University boards (out of 3600)

Whose knowledge?

Published and online knowledge

“Scholarship” and scholars

do not read, look or sound

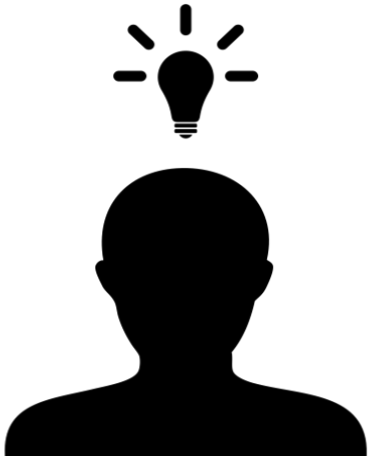
like the **majority of the world**

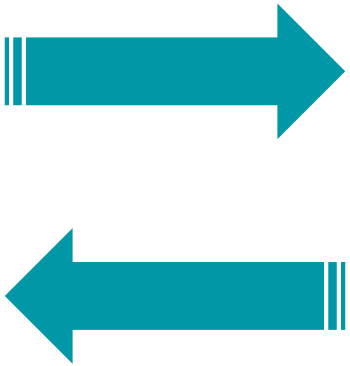
People are Knowledge(s)

Image by Alamcsd at wts wikivoyage (Own work) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Embodied (tacit) knowledge

Disembodied (formal) knowledge





People's
authority

Institutional
authority

Images from Noun Project by Wilson Joseph and Pravin Unagar

Epistemic Injustice

BLACK LIVES MATTER

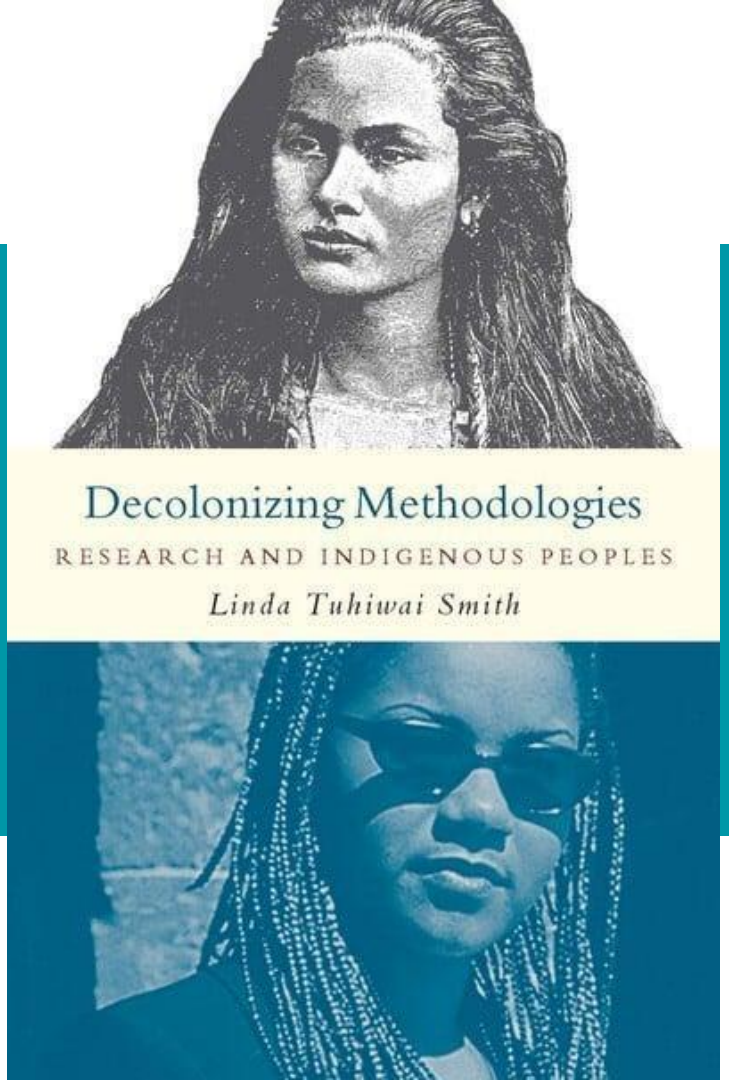
Testimonial

Hermeneutical

Black Lives Matter logo PD, via Wikimedia Commons

By Marc Nozell CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

“To resist is to retrench in the margins, retrieve what we were and remake ourselves.”



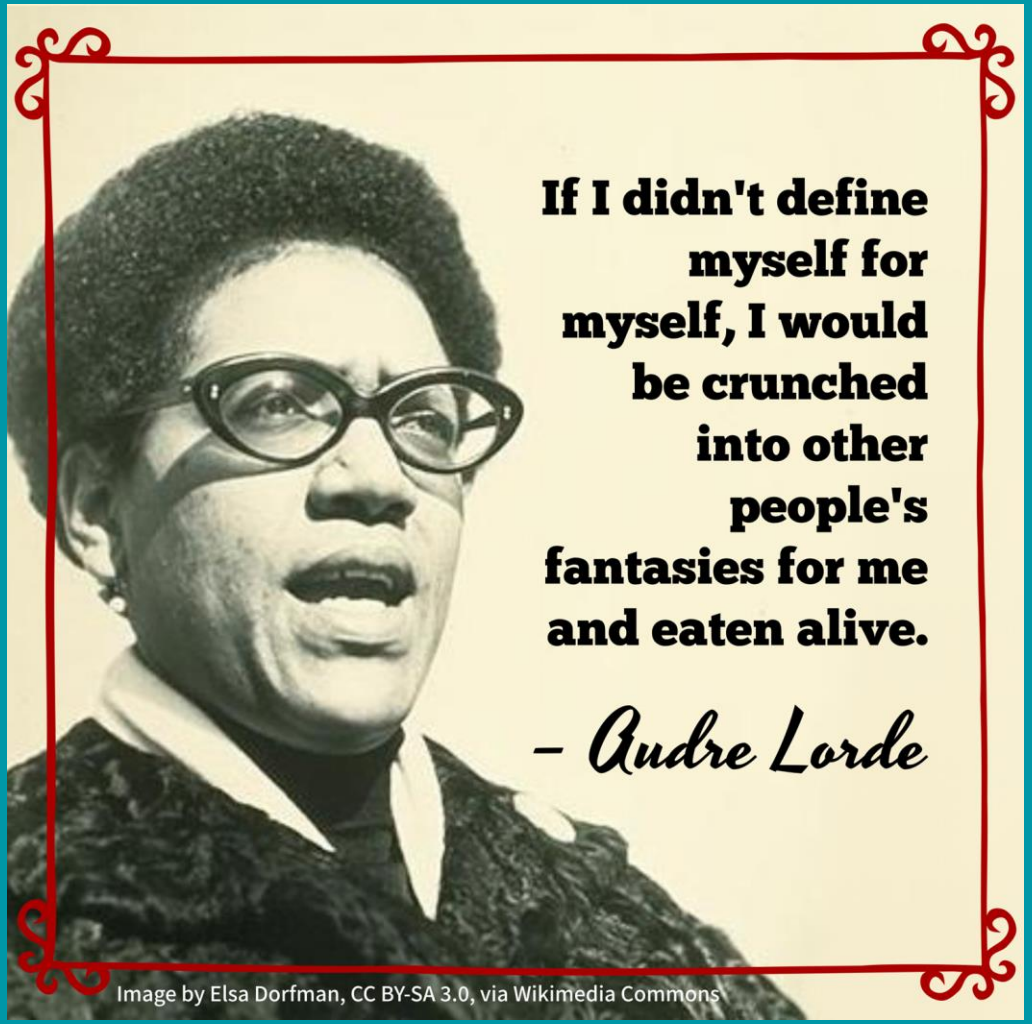
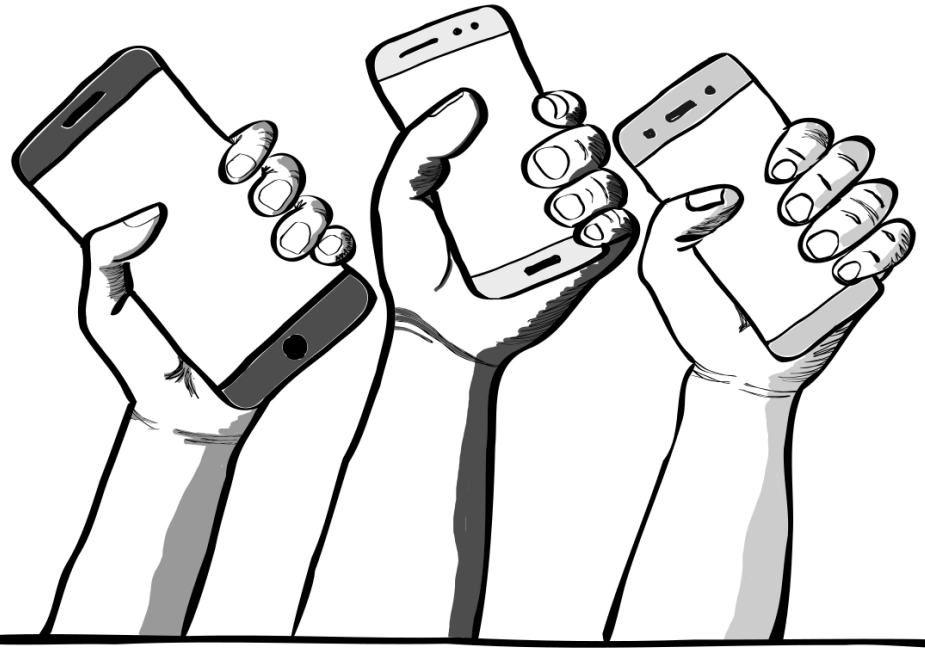


Image by Elsa Dorfman, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

DEcolonize theINTERNET



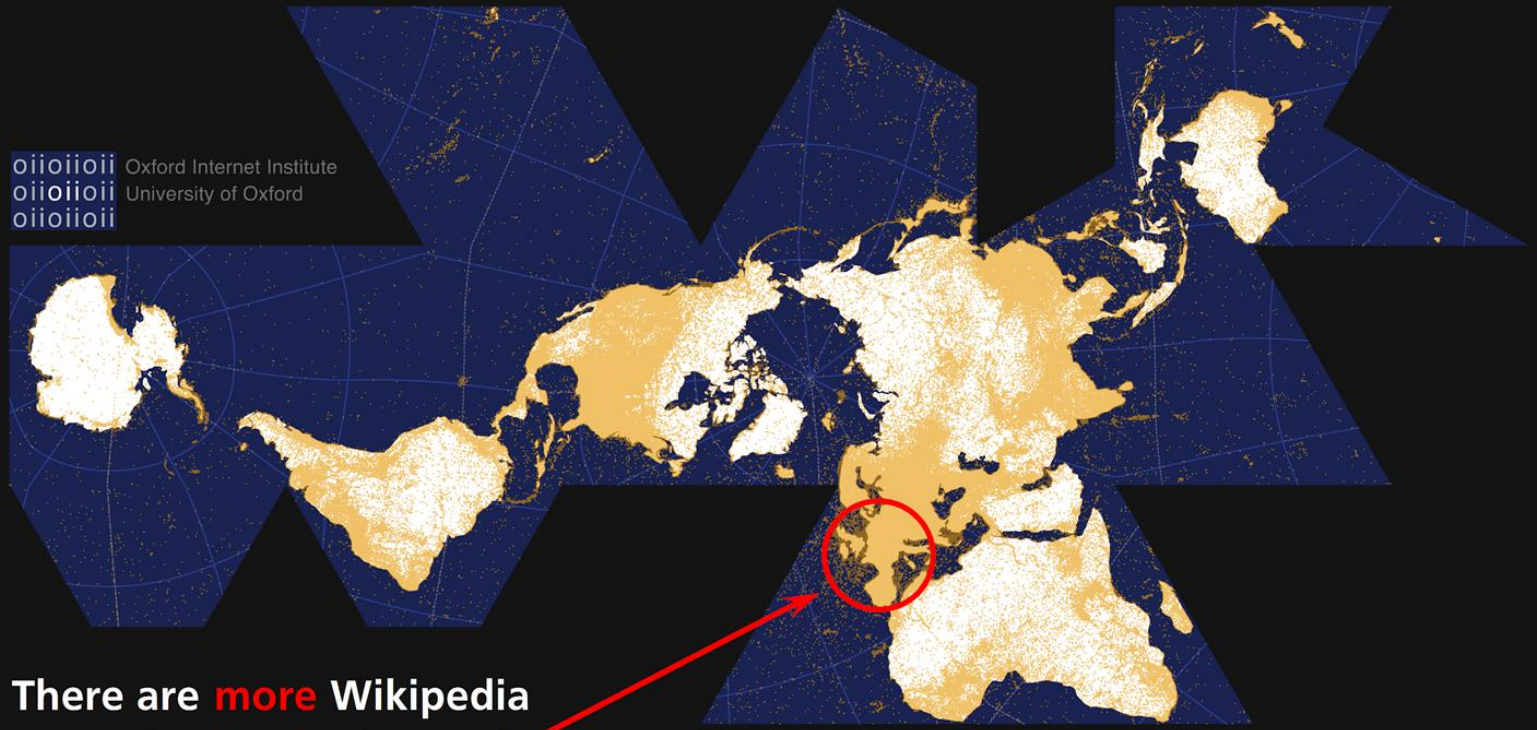
Using Wikipedia as a proxy...

Only 10% of Wikipedia editors are women or non-binary

Only around 20% of public knowledge is produced on or by people from the Global South

The Geographically Uneven Coverage of Wikipedia

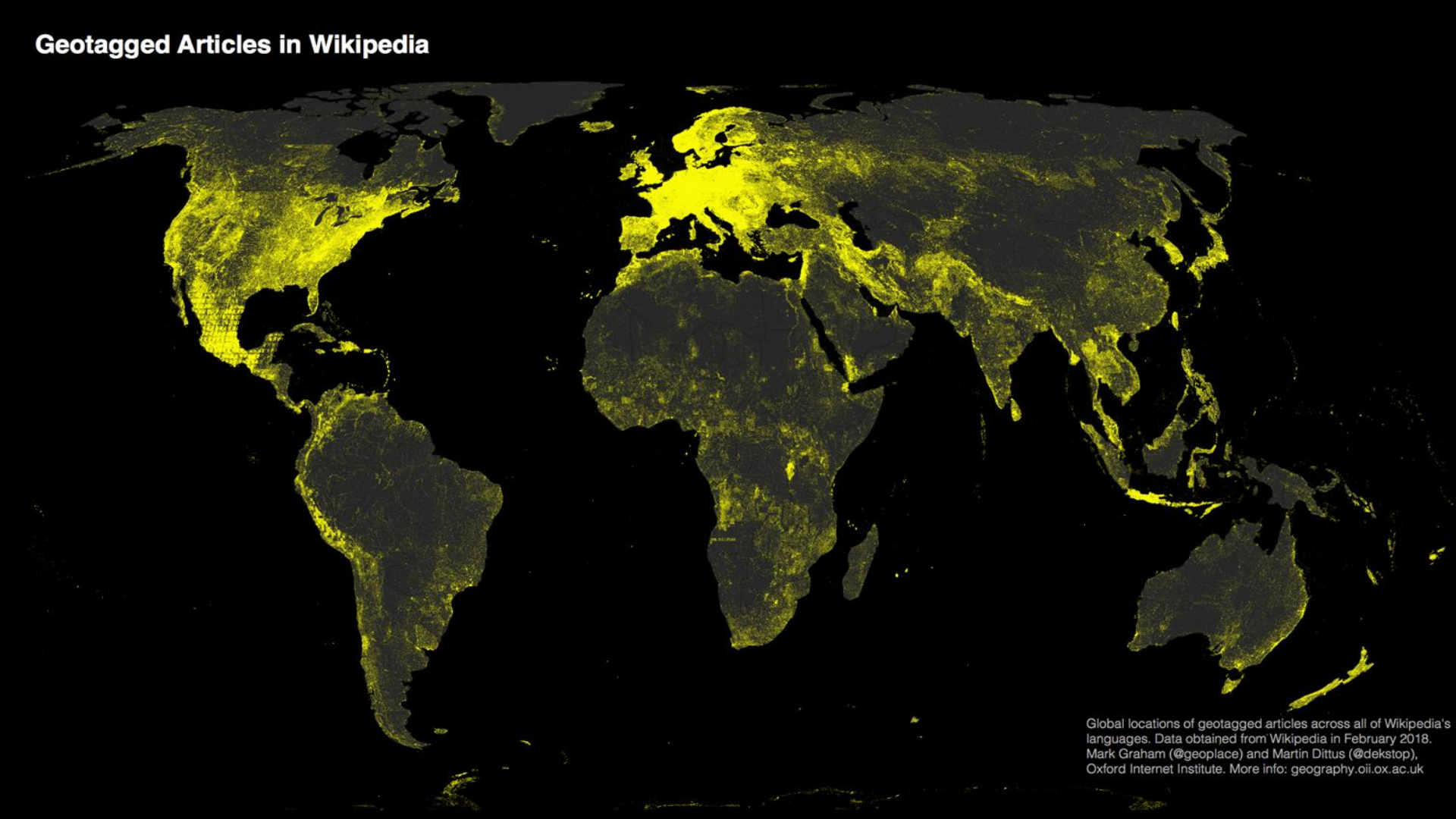
While it is an invaluable resource of knowledge for numerous users, Wikipedia's articles have a strong bias in their geographic distribution. Below map is based on 3,336,473 geotagged articles in November 2012 data dumps of 44 language versions. Each article is represented by an orange dot.



This map is part of the Information Geographies project at http://geography.oii.ox.ac.uk.

CC-BY-NC
Ralph Straumann, Mark Graham
Data sources: Wikipedia, Natural Earth

Geotagged Articles in Wikipedia



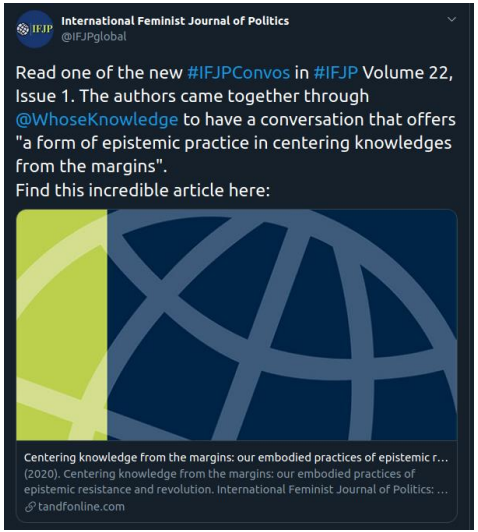
Global locations of geotagged articles across all of Wikipedia's languages. Data obtained from Wikipedia in February 2018. Mark Graham (@geoplace) and Martin Dittus (@dekstop), Oxford Internet Institute. More info: geography.oii.ox.ac.uk

Centering marginalised communities

Dalit Bahujan

Queer Bosnian

Native American



Centering knowledge from the margins: our embodied practices of epistemic resistance and revolution

“Our knowledges are urgent... They are plural. Our knowledges are transformative. They are hope.”

National Portrait Gallery [Public domain] via Wikimedia Commons

#VISIBLE WIKI WOMEN

CALLS TO ACTION

Who and what is “made” invisible and unheard in knowledge and scholarship in ...our work ...our lives?

Look around you: who is missing?

Who do you read?
Who do you watch?
Who do you follow on social media?

Curation

Who/what do we archive+curate?
Who does this curating?

Preservation

How many forms+languages?
How to preserve oral knowledge?
How resilient is this content?

Citation

Whose knowledge do we cite and how?

whoseknowledge.org

THANK YOU

Kira Allmann

kira.allmann@csls.ox.ac.uk
@KiraAllmann

Anasuya Sengupta

anasuya@whoseknowledge.org
@Anasuyashh
@whoseknowledge