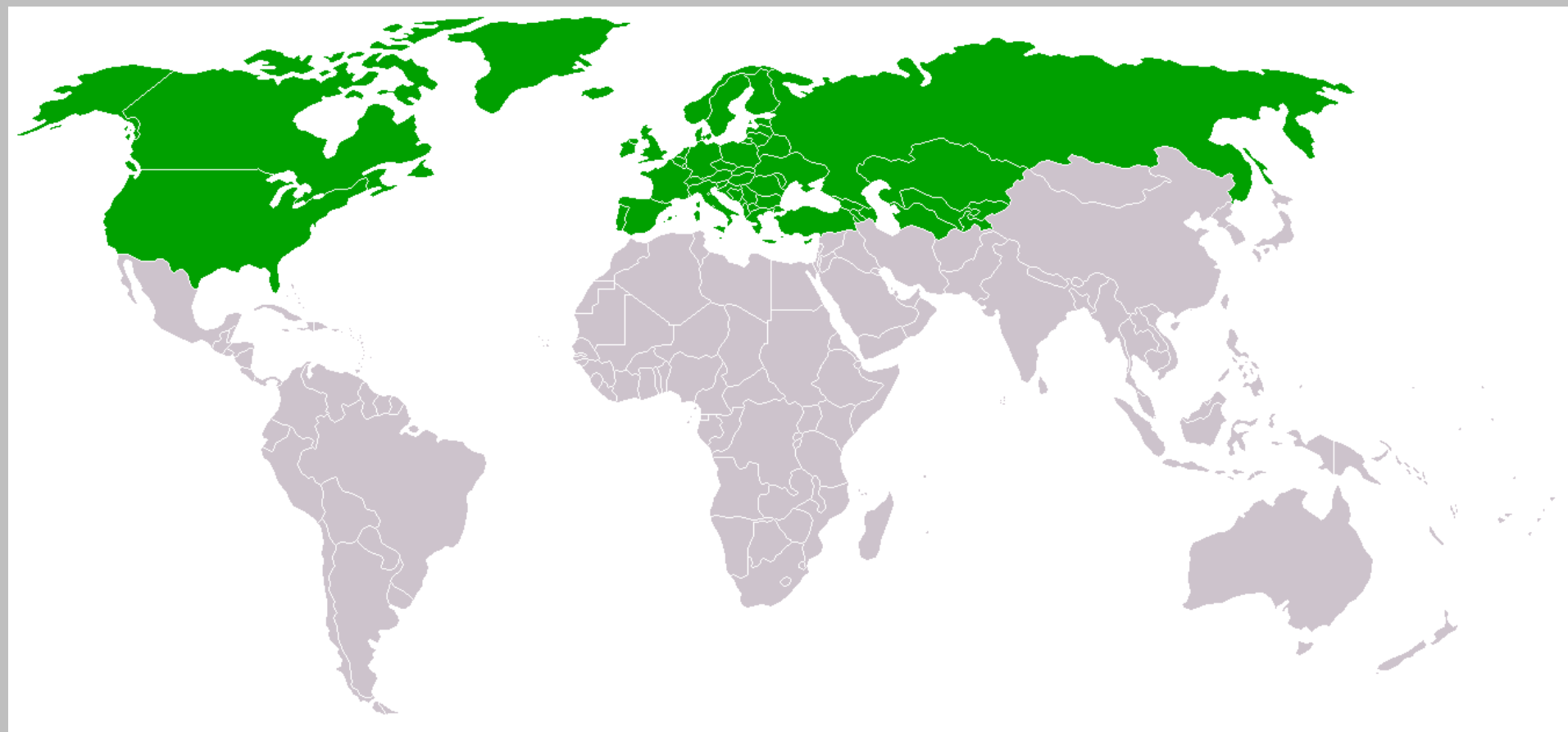


Coloniality of power in Wikimedia

A vision from the (so called) Global
South

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Mexico City. Wikimania 2015

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[User:Peka~commonswiki](#) OSCEmap 2005.png
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GLOBAL SOUTH USER SURVEY 2014 FULL DATA REPORT

Beginning in 2011, we will expand Wikipedia Program to the [Global South](#). Our goal is to

WMF's New Global South Strategy

- Support healthy diversity in the editing community by doubling the percentage of female editors to 25 percent and increase the percentage of Global South editors to 37 percent

- The conceptual division between GN/GS has good acceptation inside both institutional (WMF) and non-institutional (community) sides of the Wikimedia movement.
- However, that concept comes from a way of exert the power in a geopolitical way.

The coloniality of power is a sociological theory created by the peruvian thinker Aníbal Quijano.

“Colonialidad del poder, esto es la idea de ‘raza’ como fundamento del patrón universal de clasificación social básica y de dominación social.”

“Coloniality of the power, is the idea of ‘race’ as foundation of the universal pattern of basic social division and social domination”

Quijano, 2000

<http://www.rrojasdatabank.info/pfpc/quijan02.pdf>

- This idea is complemented with the reflections of Boaventura do Sousa Santos, who developed a «*sociology of absences*», what is a bunch of ways and assumptions done by western cultures that creates invisibility against non-western cultures and thoughts.
- However this idea is applied as an epistemology, it can be used to analyze other kind of discourses.

- Colonial**ity** is not colonial**ism**, but is its son.
- The world-power is eurocentric and westernized.
- The non eurocentric or western powers are taken as inferior and non developed.

(wrong) Assumptions from the coloniality

- All the GS is the same and has the same problems. A division by regions or countries is useless. GN/GS are absolute blocks.
- The way to do the things created by GN is the correct and generates development. All must be as in the GN.
- What the GS needs is only money and progress.
- The main barrier between GN/GS is the language.

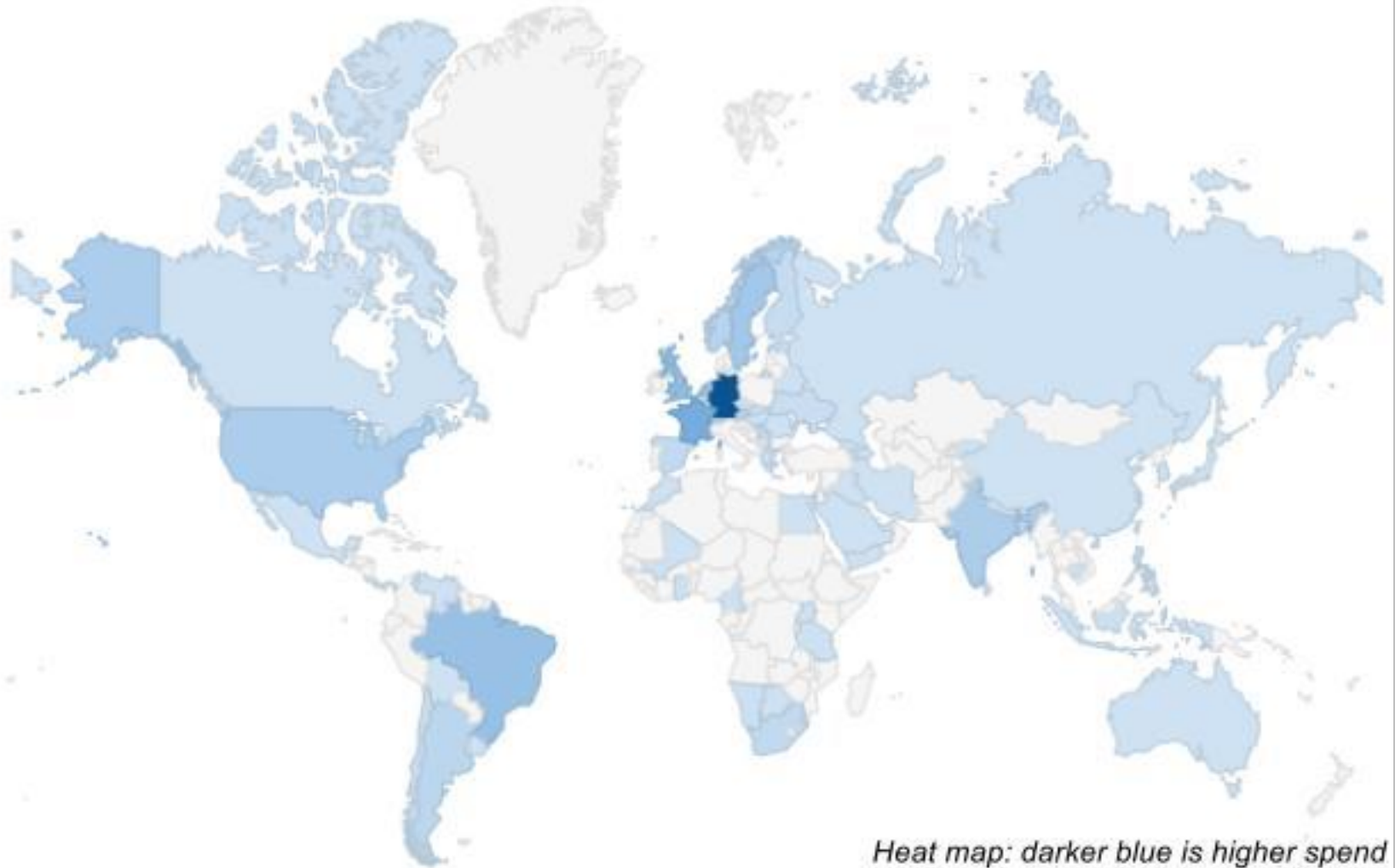
Does this assumptions live in Wikimedia?

- Corporativism. All should work as an enterprise.
- What is not measurable is not valuable.
- Paternalism. “We know what they need”, “I can talk for them”.

And this is shown in...

...how the money is disbursed,

Distribution of WMF Grants funding, YTD 2013-14
(by \$ amount)

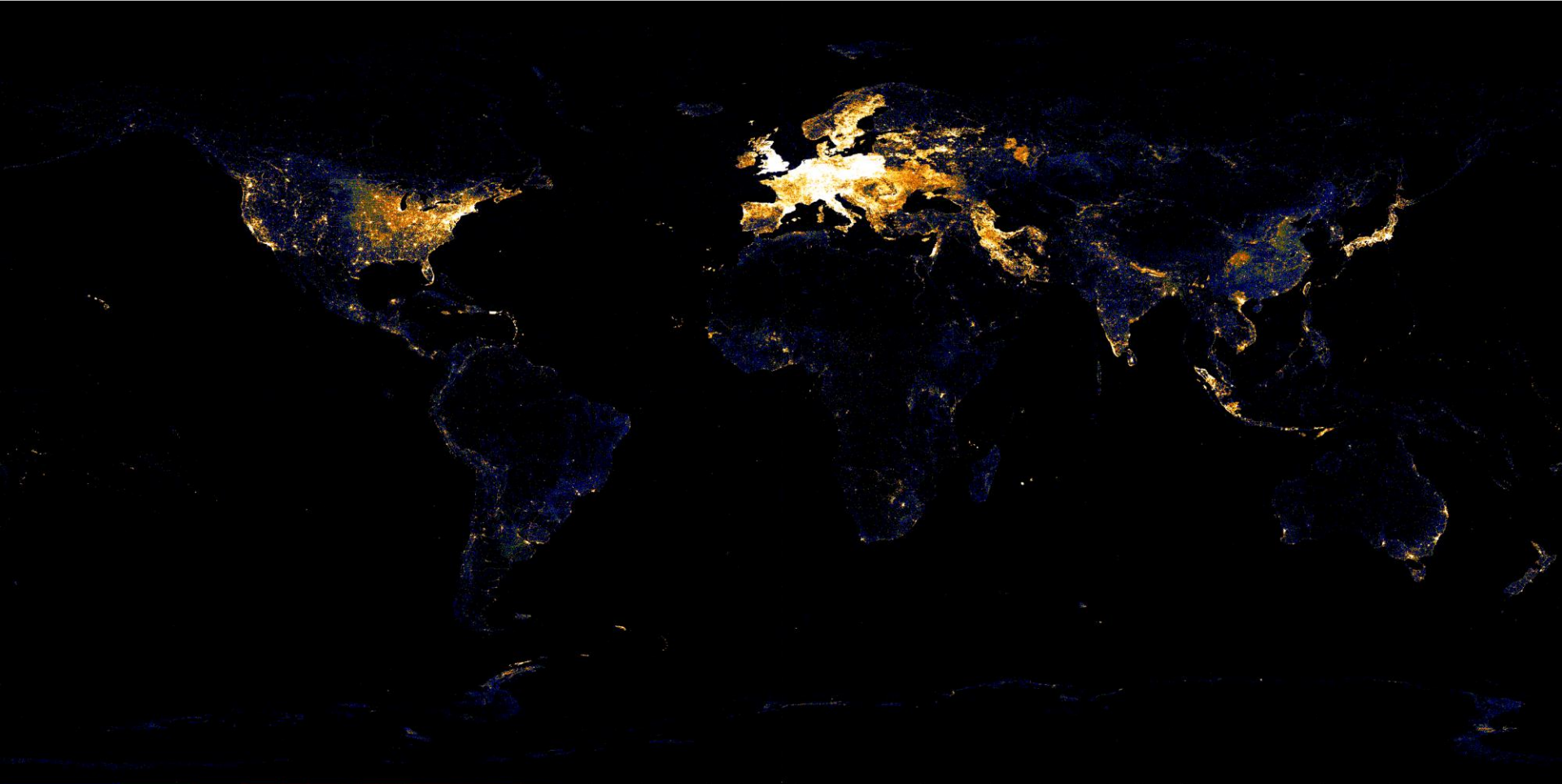


...how the WMF Board is composed,



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...and finally, how knowledge is distributed in our projects

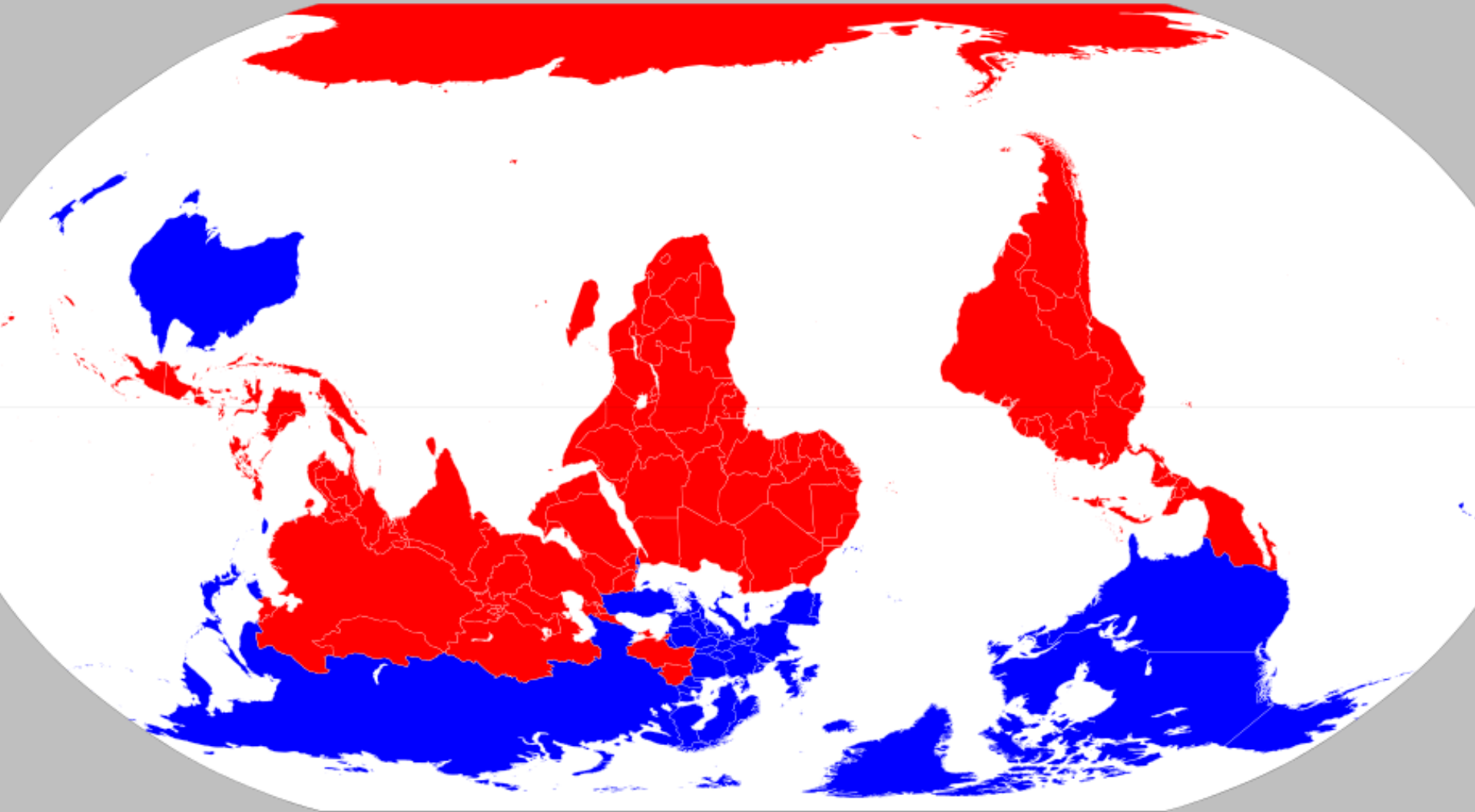


Wikidata map of geolocalized items.
June 2015

Markus Krötzsch Creative Commons CC-0
International Center for Computational Logic.
Technische Universität Dresden.
<https://dill.inf.tu-dresden.de/web/Wikidata/Maps-06-2015/en>

Let's find the fair middle!

There are souths in the North



And norths in the South

Proposals

- The interchange of best practices seen as “this is a way that have worked for somebody somewhere” and not as “this is the only way of do the things that works”.
- Disbursing money for developing skills and learning also, not only for doing activities. Let’s promote people besides activities.
- Promote a true diversity* inside the structures of decision of WMF.
 - *True diversity as ideological diversity not only as geographical.

Extra comments

- After exposing this presentation in Wikimanía 2015, María Cruz from the WMF told me that some data was outdated, specially that referred to money disbursement. She suggested to check the following links:

https://meta.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:WMF_Quarterly_Review_-_Q2_FY15_-_Grantmaking_-_Community_Growth.pdf

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:APG/FDC_portal/FDC_recommendations/2014-2015_round1

Anyway, an updated map for grants distribution is still pending of being created.

- Christophe Henner suggested that we should start to consider the money spending from a money-value-absolute perspective, that is, related to purchasing power in every country. It is not the same to disburse 1 US dollar in Paris than in Buenos Aires or Pakistan. Quite interesting perspective.
- Ginevra Sanvitale and Martin Rulsch suggested me to point out that the consideration of the Global North as an absolute block is also a fantasy the same as in the GS. I resumed that in the idea that «there are souths in the North». Anyway it's completely true that Europe is a great example of inner differences and inequalities that must be considered: the division East-West Europe and the financial situation of Greece, Italy and Spain regarding the whole EU.

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The author of this presentation is a proud member of the Wikimedia chapter Wikimedia México

