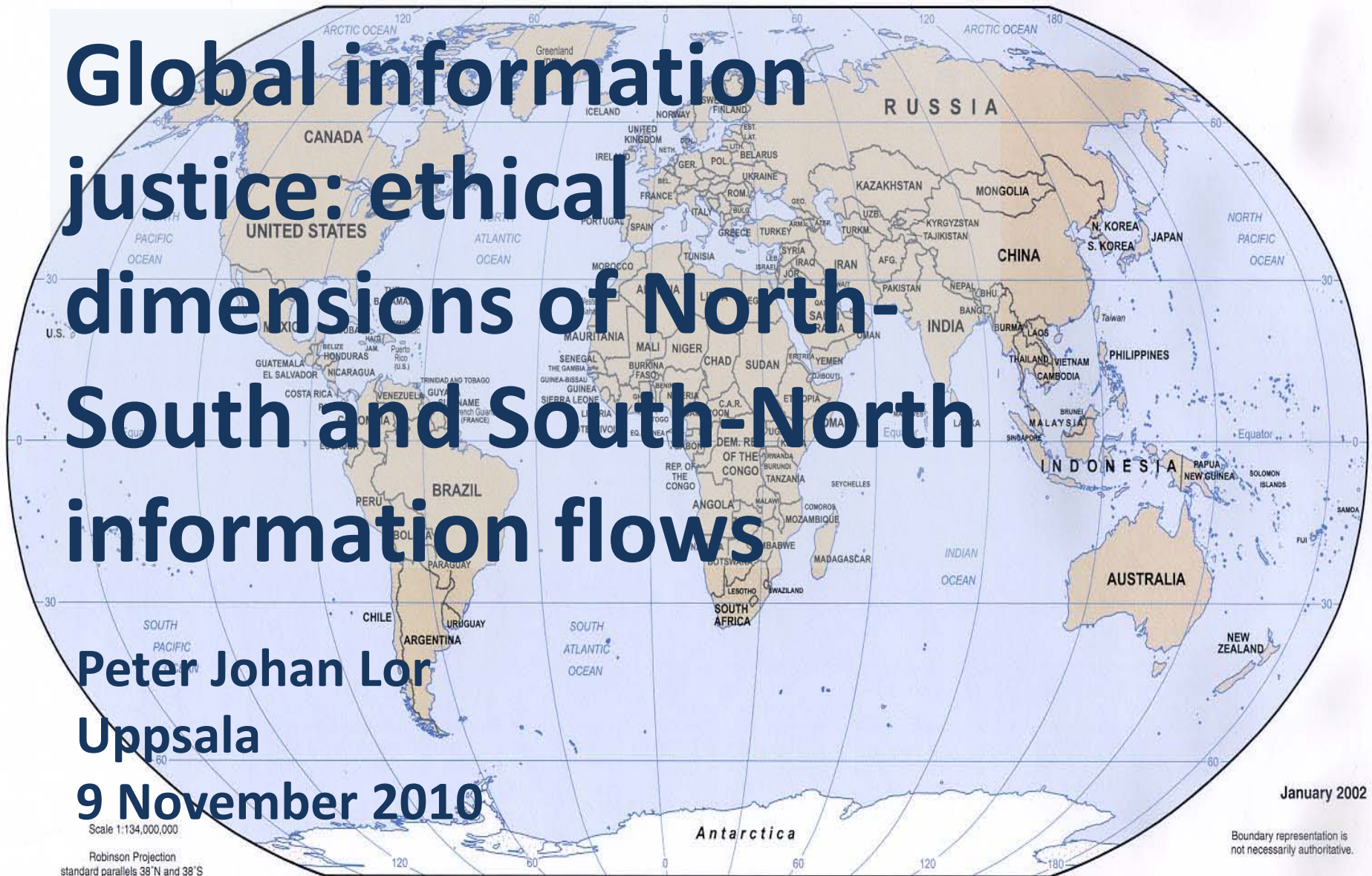


Global information justice: ethical dimensions of North- South and South-North information flows

Peter Johan Lor
Uppsala
9 November 2010

Scale 1:134,000,000
Robinson Projection
standard parallels 38°N and 38°S



January 2002

Boundary representation is
not necessarily authoritative.

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Outline

- Global context of information flows
 - North-South
 - South-North
 - South-South
- Some ethical considerations

North?

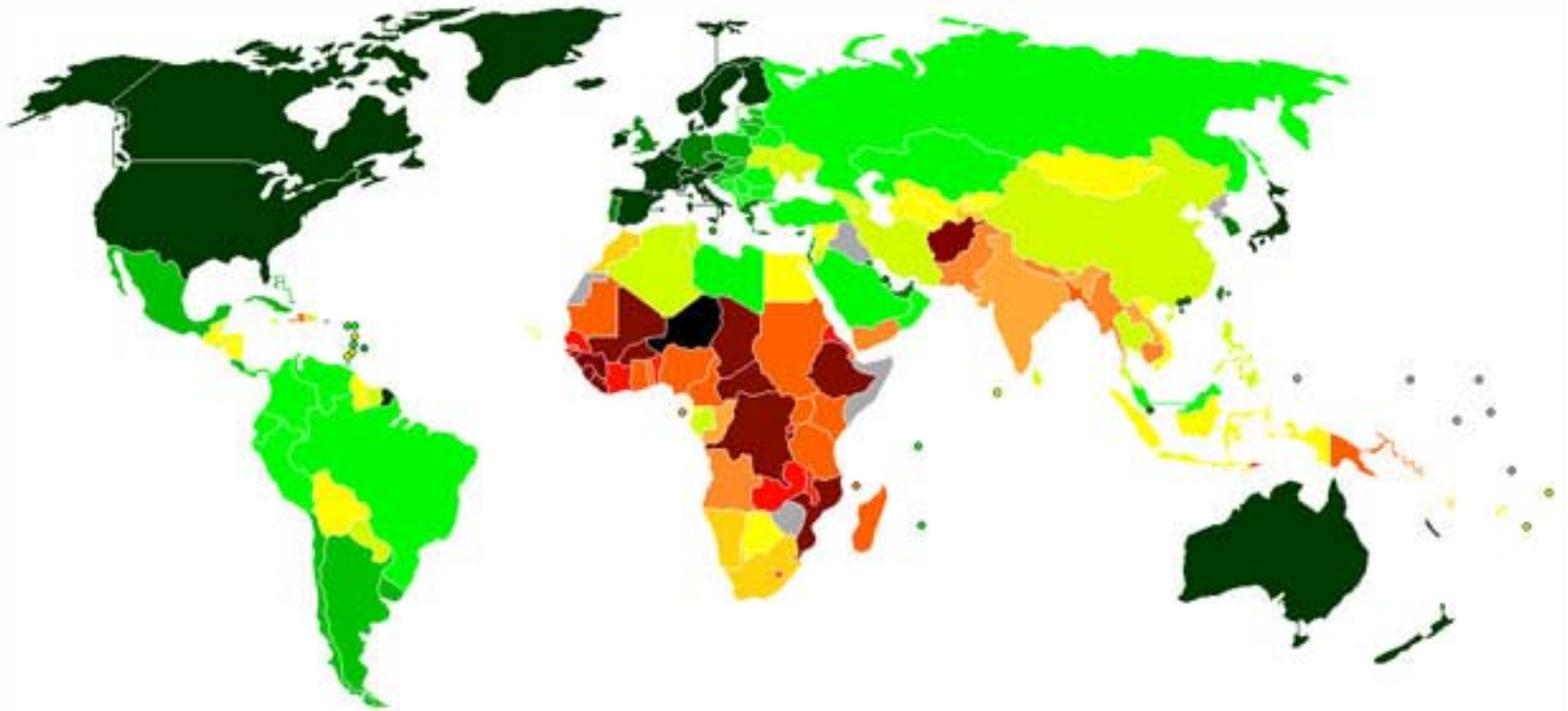


Member countries of the OECD

(Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development)

Image: Wikimedia, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OECD-memberstates.png>

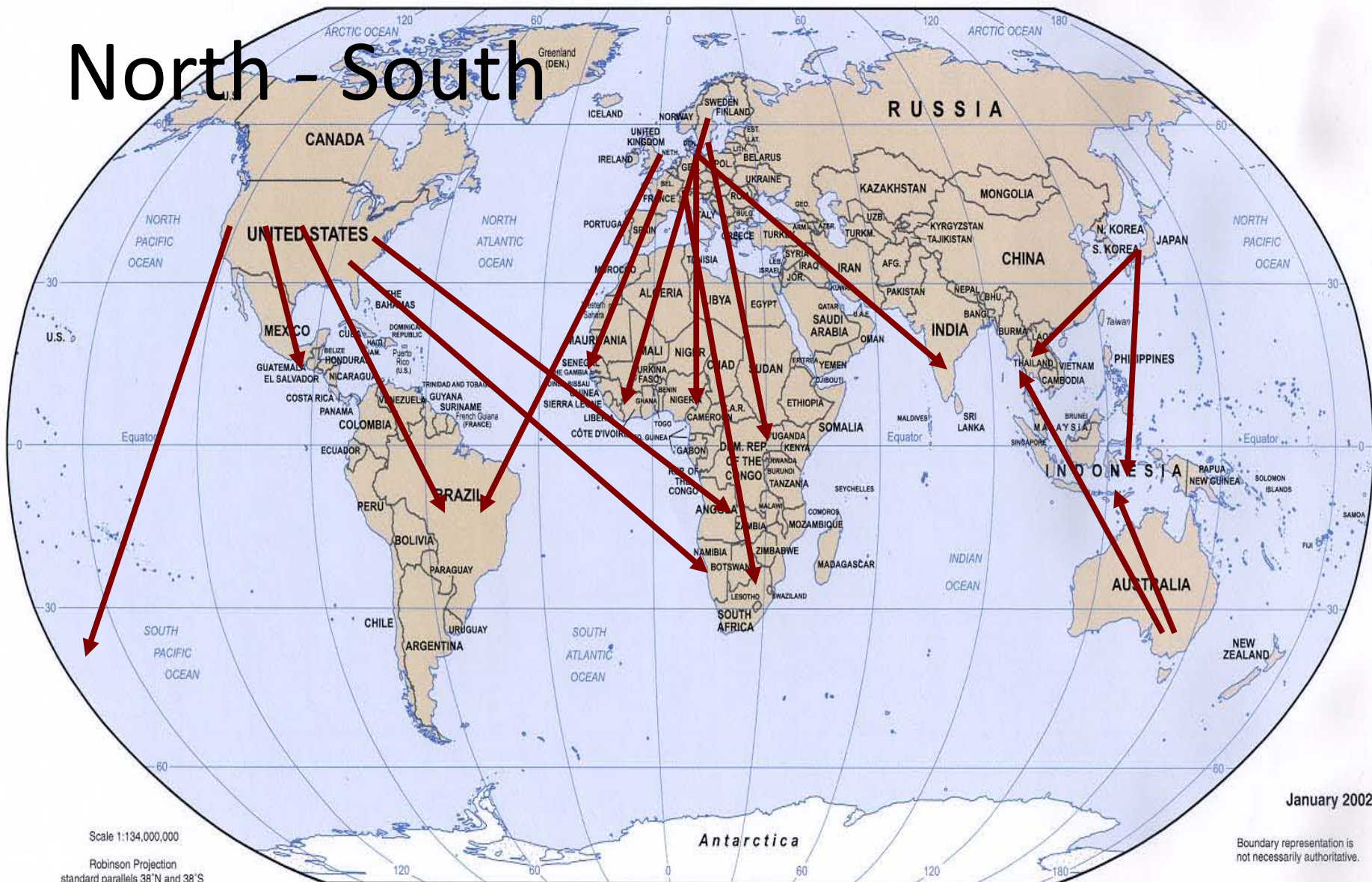
South?



World map indicating the Human Development Index (based on 2007 data, published on October 5, 2009)

Image: http://www.geography-revision.co.uk/global_maps.php

North - South

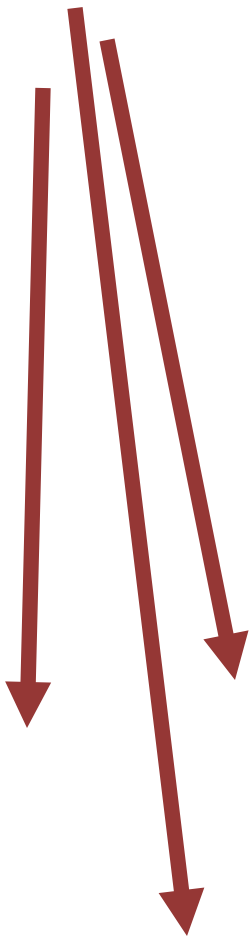


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North-South (outline)

- 
- Information for development
 - A “helping hand”
 - Book aid to combat “book famine”
 - Access to Knowledge (A2K)

North-South

- **Information for development ?**

- What is “development”?
- Who decides what is best?
 - Neo-liberal theories: economics, GDP
 - Neo-Marxist theories: dependency, centre & periphery... political, social, cultural factors

North-South

- 
- Information for development
 - **A “helping hand”** ?

- Government agencies (SIDA etc.)
 - Intergovernmental organizations
(UNESCO, NATIS, UNISIST, PADIS...)
 - Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Problems:
- Donor-driven
 - Unintended consequences
 - Dependence
 - Corruption

Aid – *Van de wal in de sloot?*

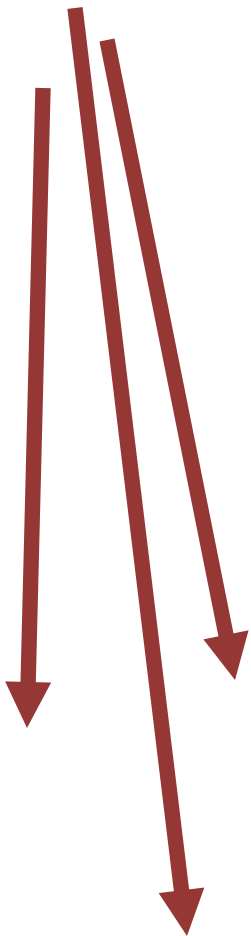


Moyo, Dambisa (2009) *Dead aid: why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux. –
Controversial!



Image: State of Pakistan, <http://www.yousufnazar.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/10/foreign-aid.jpg>

North-South

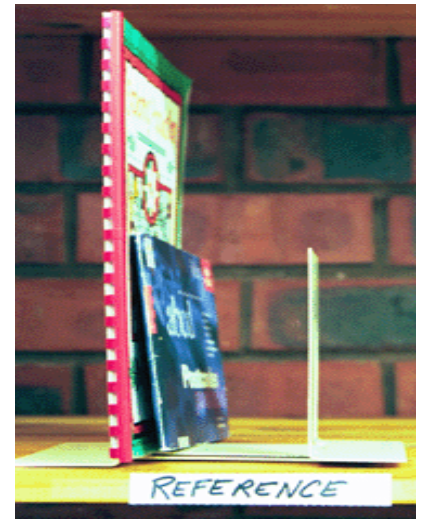
- 
- Information for development
 - A “helping hand”
 - **Book aid to combat “book famine”** ?
 - Famine! → send Food!
Book famine? → send Books!

Book famine!

How is this possible in South Africa, the biggest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa?

This school library at Mogosane Combined School in the Northwest province, South Africa, is one of only a few functional libraries in this rural area.

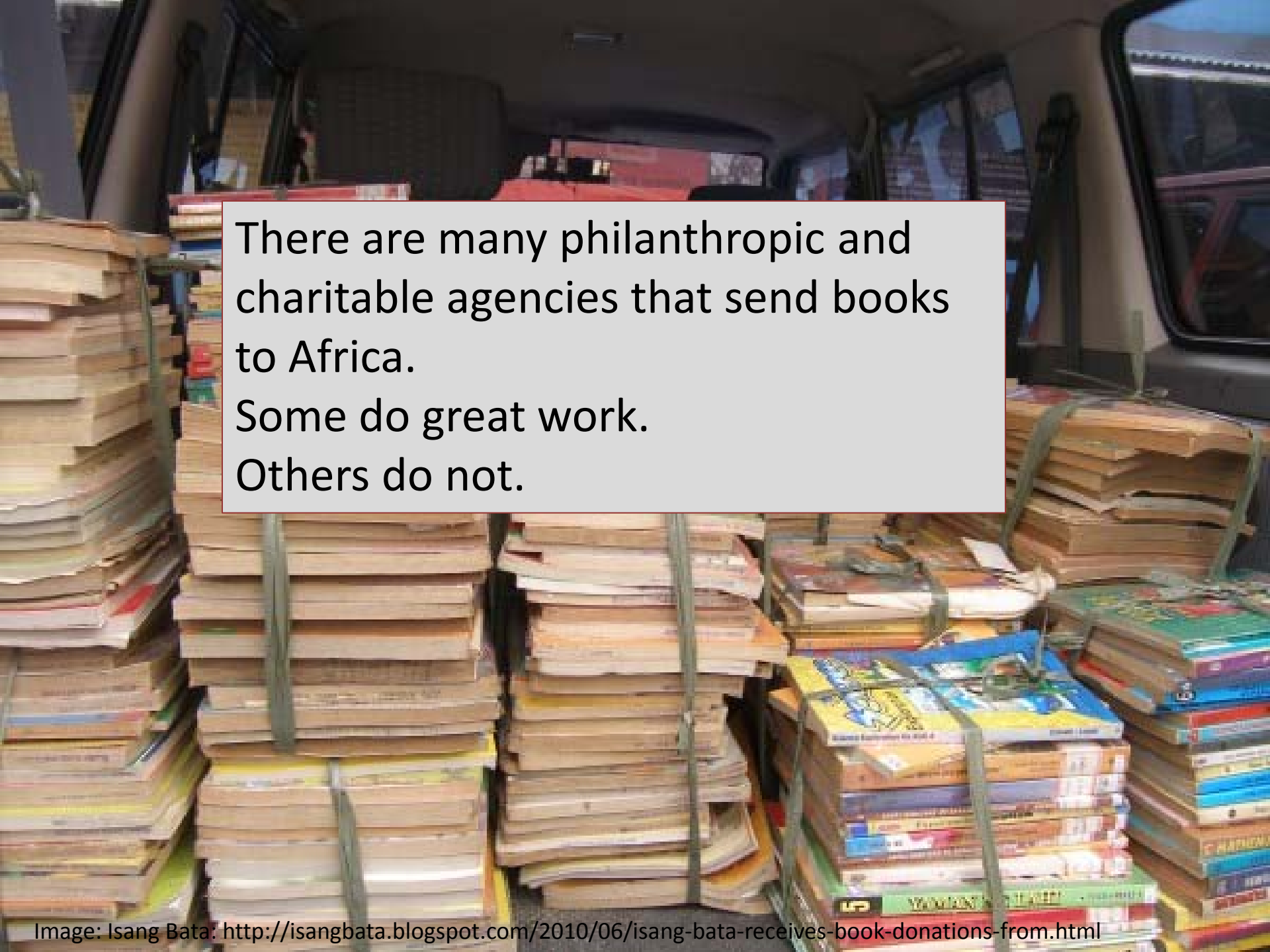
Images: iBiblio,
<http://www.ibiblio.org/wlp/7-11-mogosane-library.html>



Send books!



Image: Isang Bata: <http://isangbata.blogspot.com/2010/06/isang-bata-receives-book-donations-from.html>



There are many philanthropic and
charitable agencies that send books
to Africa.
Some do great work.
Others do not.

The background of the slide is a photograph of the interior of a van. The van is packed with numerous stacks of books, some standing upright and others lying flat. The books are of various colors and sizes, creating a dense, colorful pattern. The perspective is from inside the van, looking towards the back. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular box with a thin red border.

“Horror stories” abound.

To Namibia:

American books on hairdressing (in Spanish)

(personal communication)

To Nigeria:

The topography of Wales (1820)

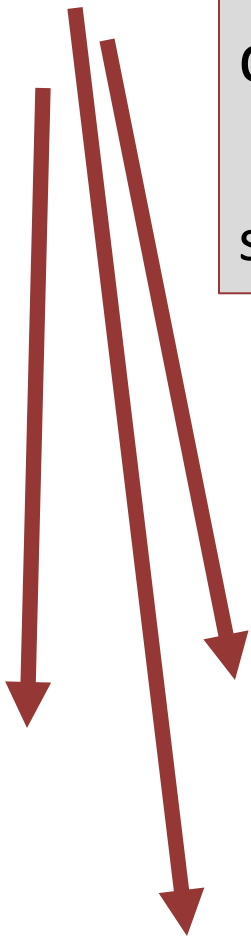
Morley’s *The life of Richard Cobden* (1879)

How to win the war: an address to the Polish people
(in Polish)

(From: Sturges & Neil, *The quiet struggle*)

Publishers’ remainders = tax breaks

North-South



Books, journals, reports needed for development:

Education, research, health, agriculture, social services, public administration...

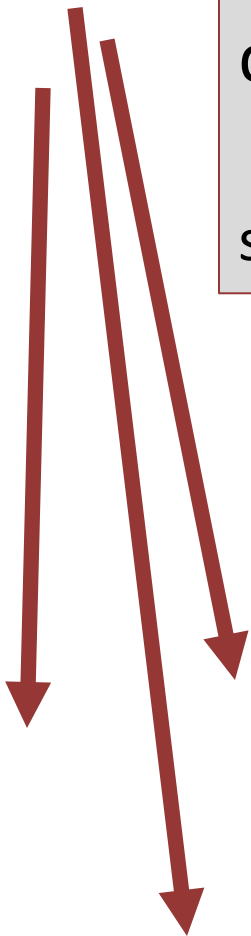
• **Access to Knowledge (A2K) ?**

Many forms of aid:

HINARI, AGORA, OARE
eIFL

INASP (International Network for
Availability of Scientific Publications)
Long term sustainability?

North-South



Books, journals, reports needed for development:

Education, research, health, agriculture, social services, public administration...

• **Access to Knowledge (A2K) ?**

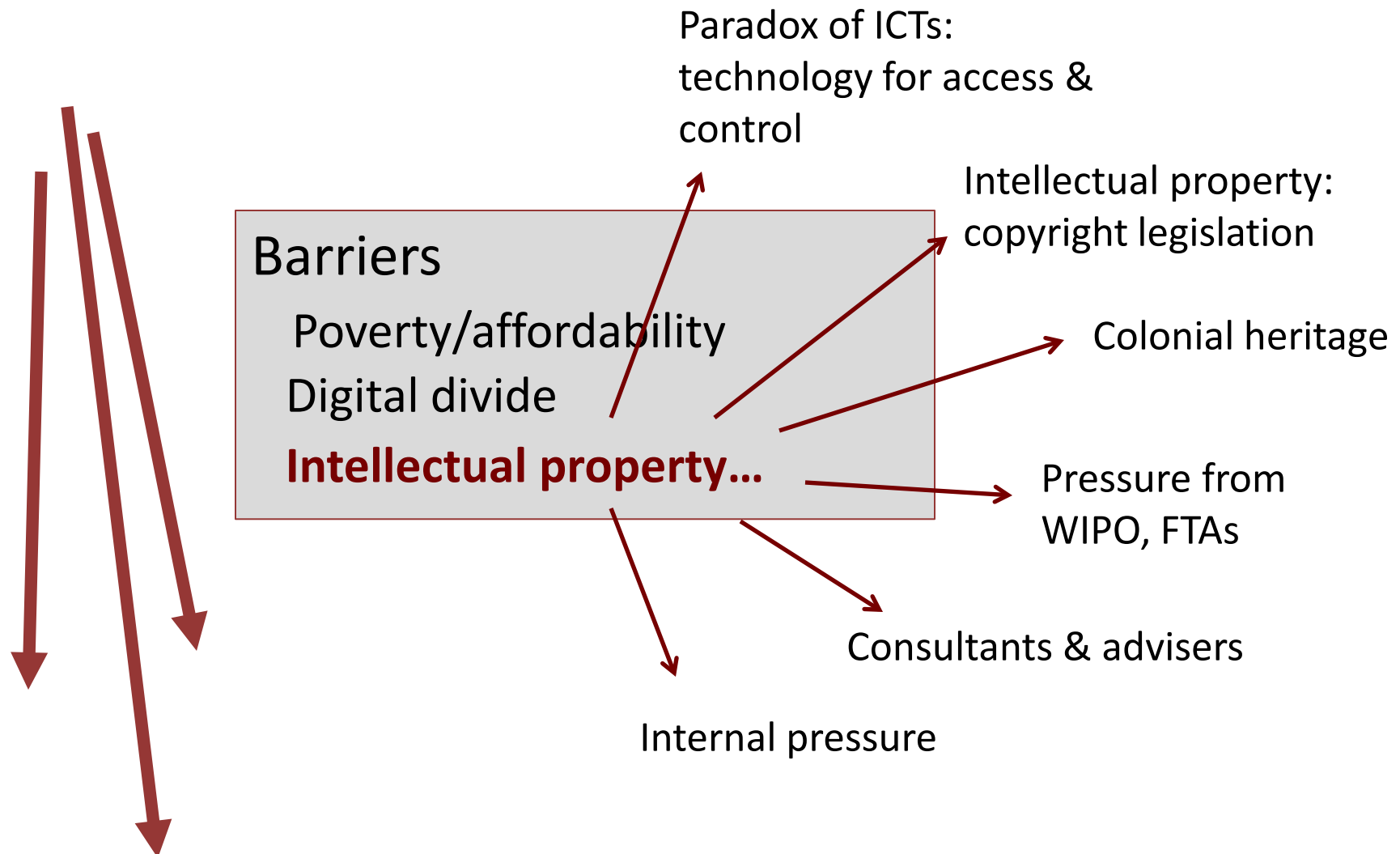
Barriers

Poverty/affordability

Digital divide

Intellectual property...

North-South

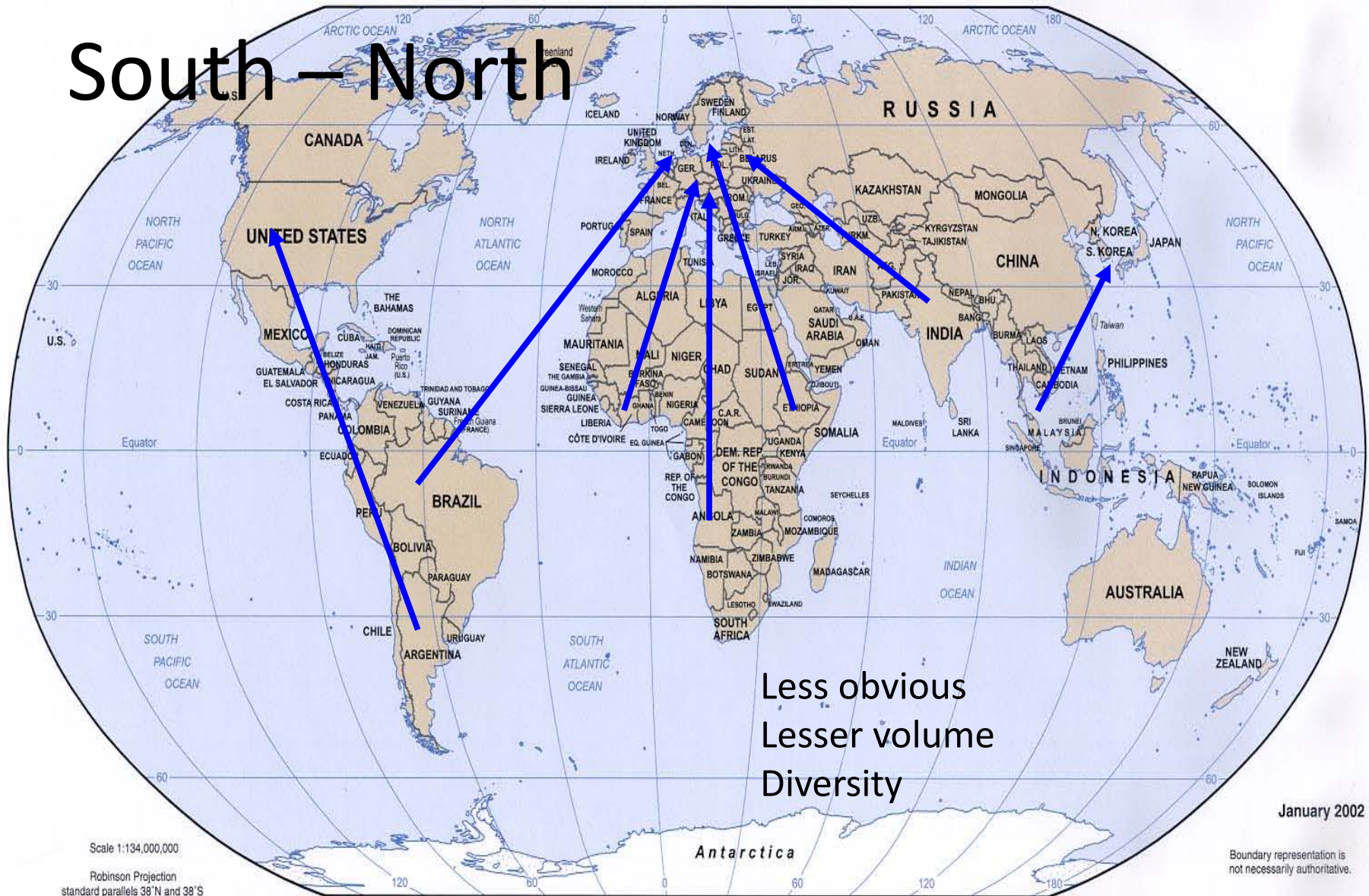


North-South

- ACA2K: African Copyright and Access to Knowledge
 - Eight countries
 - Legislation and practice
 - African countries don't need more copyright laws
 - Laws already too restrictive
 - Widespread ignorance & contravention
 - Strict enforcement would be disastrous

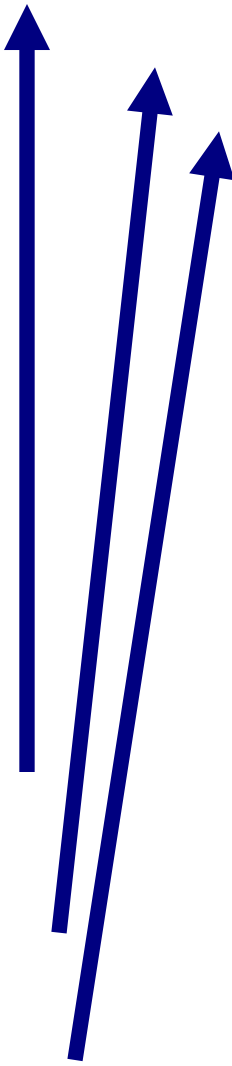


South – North



Less obvious
Lesser volume
Diversity

South-North

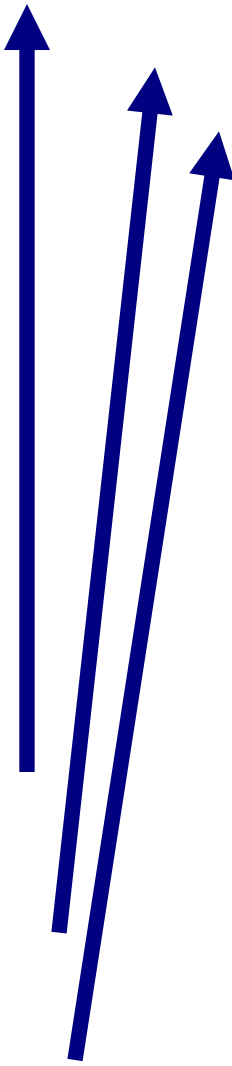
- 
- Knowledge production is not a monopoly of the North
 - Centers of Learning: Alexandria, Timbuktu
 - African science
 - Indigenous knowledge
 - Biodiversity, cultural diversity
 - Area studies

South-North

- 
- Knowledge production is not a monopoly of the North

- Cer But: an imbalance –
- Afr African scholars are “active consumers” but
- Ind “passive contributors”
- Bio of scholarly information
- Area studies (Poppeliers 2010)

South-North

- 
- South-North Information flow characterized by a paradox in attitudes to African knowledge:
 - Neglect, disdain
 - Cf. Amartya Sen on British attitudes to Indian civilization: curatorial, magisterial, exoticist
 - Exploitation

South-North flows

- 
- Categories of S-N information flows
 - Scholarly contributions by African scholars
 - Purchase of current African publications
 - Buying up African heritage collections
 - Use of local research resources & informants
 - **Indigenous knowledge & biopiracy**
 - **Digitization**

Managing & saving indigenous knowledge

- IK is a living thing
- Transmitted orally
- Knowledge as process
- How to preserve?



http://www.cirrusimage.com/butterfly_black_swallowtail.htm

“Preserving” IK

- How to preserve without destroying
- Respect value & significance (symbolism, ritual significance, emotional resonance) to owners, also respect taboos on access

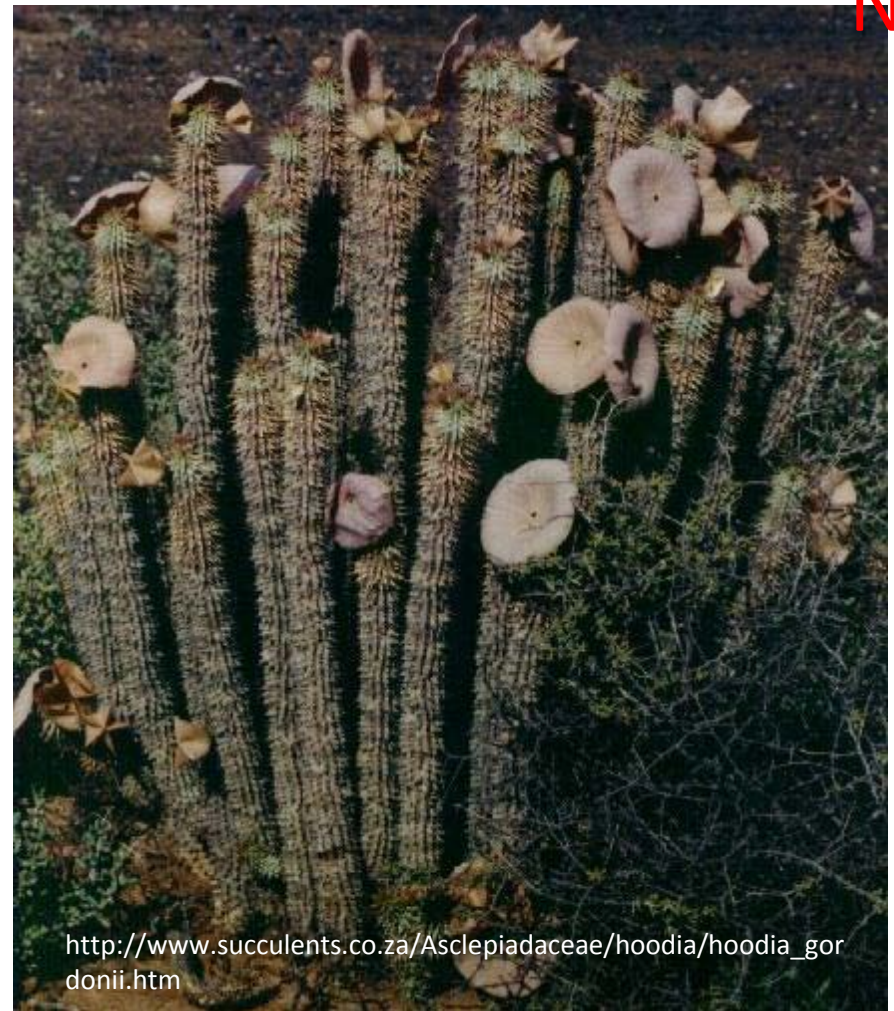


Image: Houston Museum of Natural Science,
<http://blog.hmns.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/bflies-071.jpg>

Protecting IP

- Communal property
- No single “creator” for purposes of intellectual property (IP)
- The Hoodia case

San hunters



Hoodia gordonii, Family Apocynaceae

http://www.botswanasafari.info/botswana_gudigwa_camp.html

Hoodia Gordonii Diet Pills

At Last! The Diet Pill The World Has Waited For.... **As seen on 60 Minutes**

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The Original
Hoodia Brand

Hoodia gordonii
"It's all about potency!"



HOODOBA® Hoodia
Diet Pills & Liquids

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[Tell A Friend](#)

HOODOBA® #1 HOODIA PILL IN AMERICA [Why?](#)
- BEWARE OF CHEAP IMITATIONS -

DON'T BE FOOLED BY "INDEPENDENT RESEARCH REPORTS"

WARNING # 1: Beware of "hoodia" vendors posing as consumer advocates with "Independent Hoodia Reports". These phony reports have been secretly created by said vendors who top rate their own adulterated products that often cause SIDE EFFECTS never experienced with the use of REAL Hoodia...



[PLAY \(CNN\)](#)

[News Video...](#)

[PLAY \(CBS\)](#)

[News Video...](#)

Please be patient while video loads.

As Seen on CNN & CBS Stewart Gulian



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▶ [Hoodoba® Plus](#)

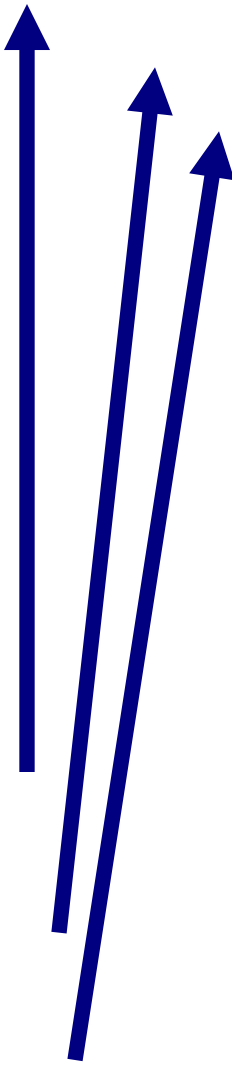
▶ [Hoodoba Combo](#)

▶ [CarboRid™](#)

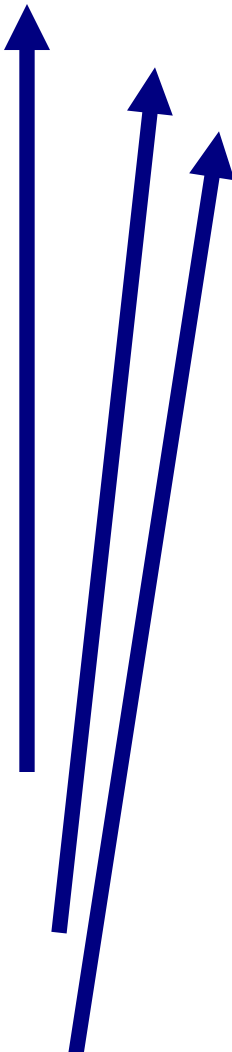
▶ [LipoRidPM™](#)

▶ [Body Cleanser](#)

South-North flows

- 
- **Digitization?** What could be wrong with that? Benefits:
 - Preservation
 - Dissemination
 - Research
 - Appreciation

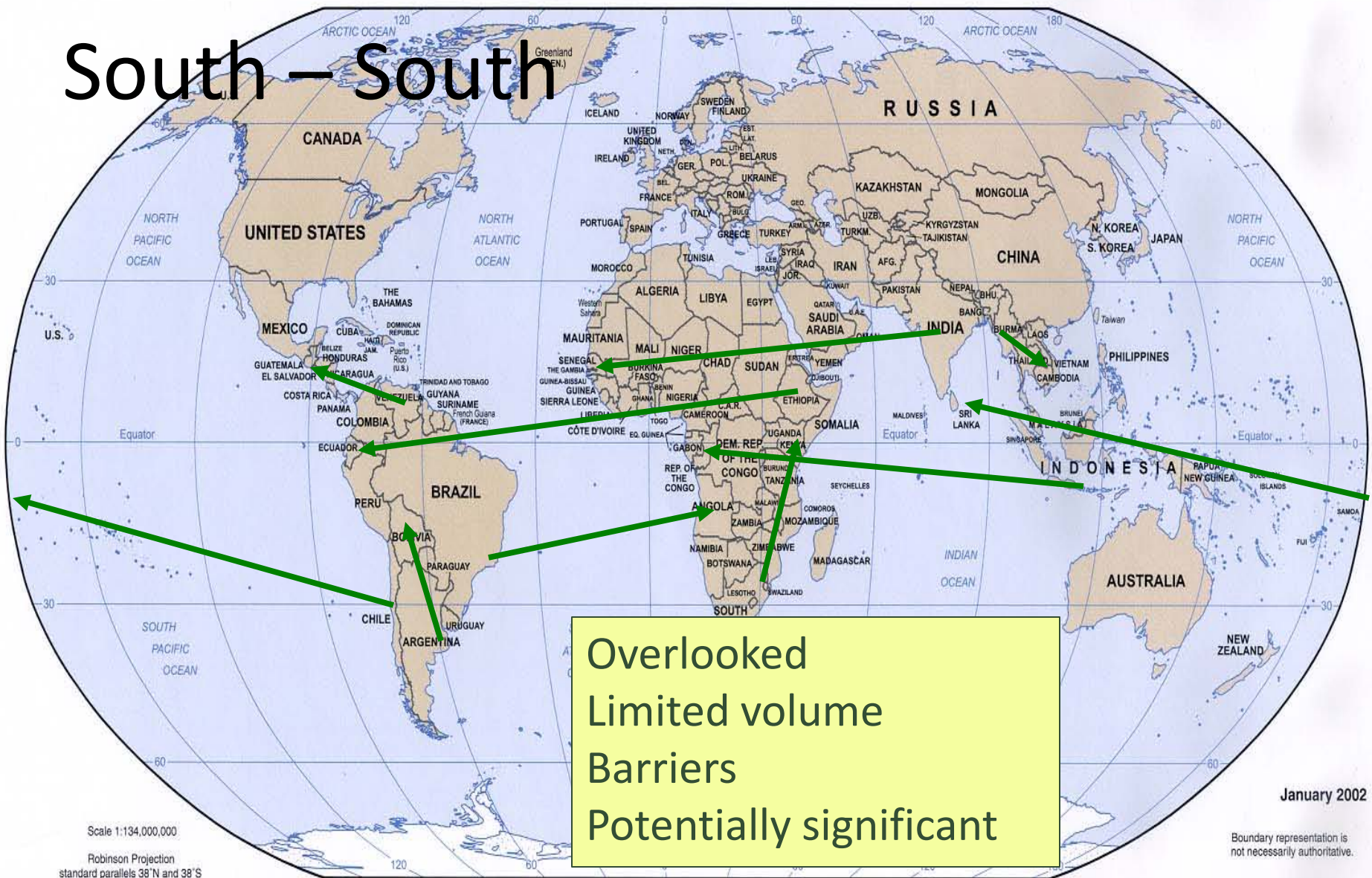
South-North flows (contd.)

- 
- Digitization? What could be wrong with that?

Questions:

- Pre Who decides what to digitize?
Consultation & collaboration?
- Dis Transfer of technology & expertise?
- Res Sustainable?
- App Who retains originals?
Who controls access to digital files?
Does anyone make money out of it?
Will materials be contextualized?
Will scholars from country of origin have free/affordable access?

South – South

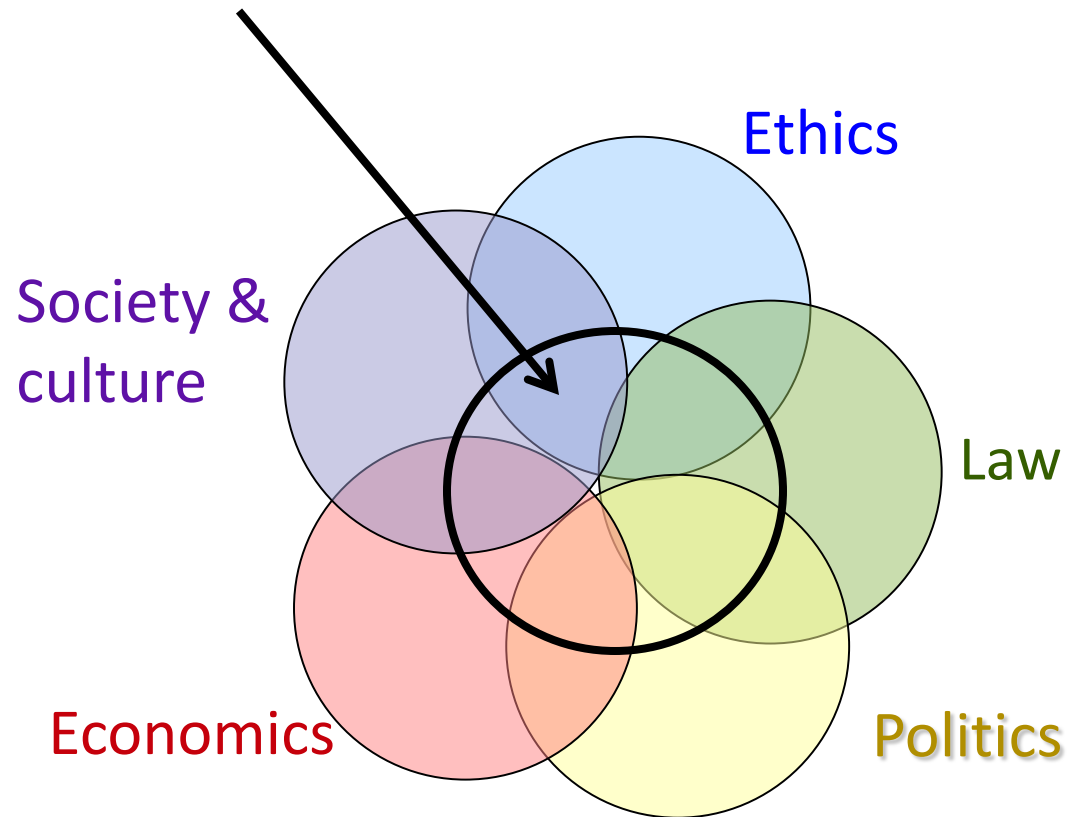


Overlooked
Limited volume
Barriers
Potentially significant

Outline

- Global context of information flows
 - North-South
 - South-North
 - South-South
- **Some ethical considerations**

Information flows in context



Information
flows

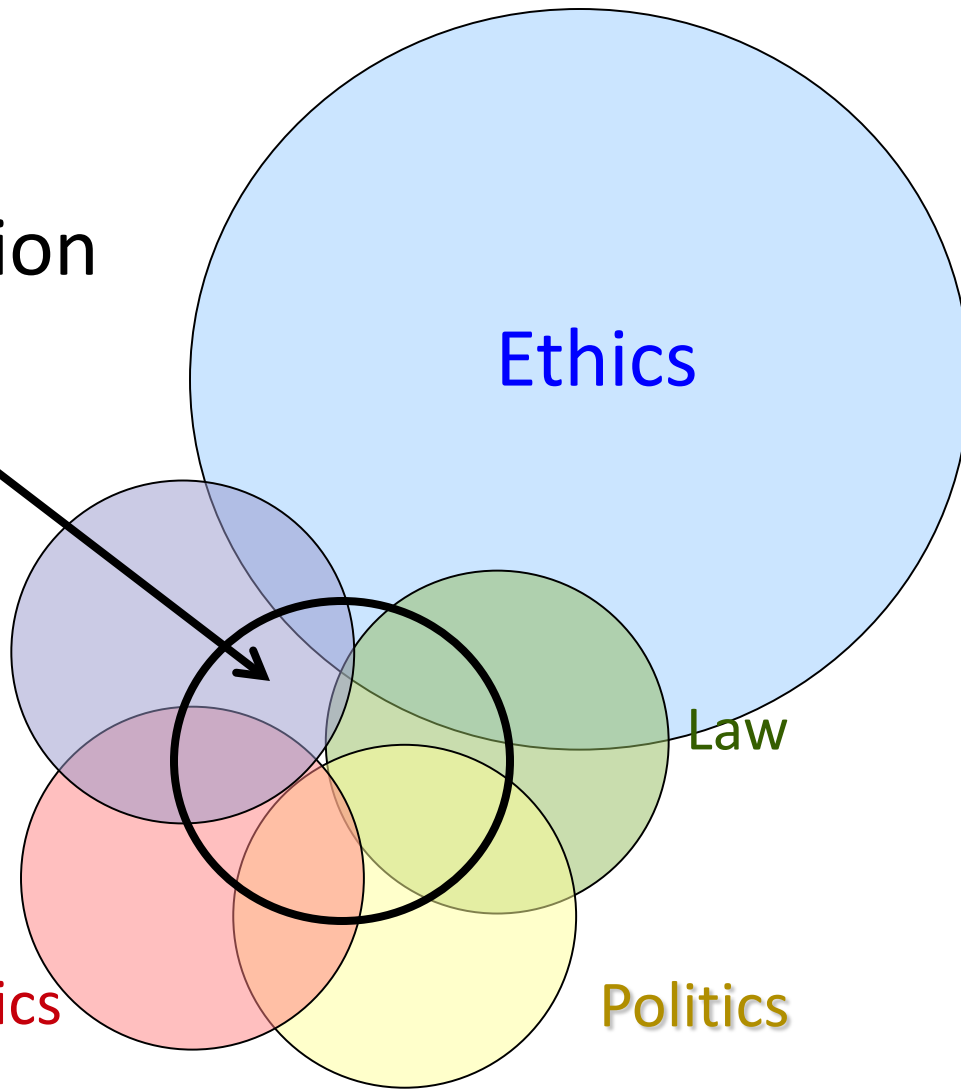
Society &
culture

Economics

Ethics

Law

Politics



Ethical dimension: a Social Justice approach

- Typology of social justice (Johannes J. Britz)
- Derived from US National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic justice for all* (1987), Rawls, Aquinas, Aristotle...
 - Commutative justice
 - Distributive justice
 - Contributive justice
 - Attributive justice (added later)
 - Retributive justice
 - Transformative justice (added later)



Image: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops,
http://www.usccb.org/jphd/economic-life/pdf/economic_justice_for_all.pdf

Commutative justice

- Fundamental fairness in agreements and exchanges between individuals and social groups
 - Inequalities in economic power or education should not be exploited, e.g.
 - Biopiracy
 - cultural looting (buying up of heritage?)
 - Researchers to report back to communities researched
 - In North-South context cf. “Free trade agreements”

Distributive justice

- Fair and equal distribution of resources needed for survival and well-being, hence moral claim to:
 - Generic antiretroviral drugs
 - Research on Malaria vaccine
 - Equitable access to information
 - Benefits of indigenous knowledge
- How does this rhyme with intellectual property: conflict or balance?

Contributive justice

- Twofold principle
 - Individuals have a responsibility to contribute to common good of society
 - Society must ensure that individuals can contribute
- Implications
 - Africa must contribute its knowledge (scholarly and traditional)
 - The world must be receptive

Attributive justice

- Justice as recognition (Britz)
 - **Attributive justice** attributes to beings what they are and can claim to be. ... " (Tillich)
- Recognise and respect the humanity and autonomy of fellow humans, hence:
 - Respect integrity of cultural heritage, e.g. in digitisation projects
 - Recognise Africans as creators
 - Recognise their right to decide what is done with their heritage (including IK)

Retributive justice

- Enforcement
- Spells out what is non-conforming behaviour and provides for fair punishment
- Mechanisms for protection of rights, e.g. to indigenous knowledge

Transformative justice

- Changing existing institutions, behaviours, practices
- Rectifying past injustices, compensation for injuries, loss, hence:
 - Repatriation of looted heritage
 - Capacity building in developing countries
 - Open access

Conclusion

- Imbalance in information flows between North and South
- Barriers to Access to knowledge in the South
- Contributions of the South both neglected and exploited
- Widespread lack of appreciation of legal and moral implications of information flows – “information justice”

So what?

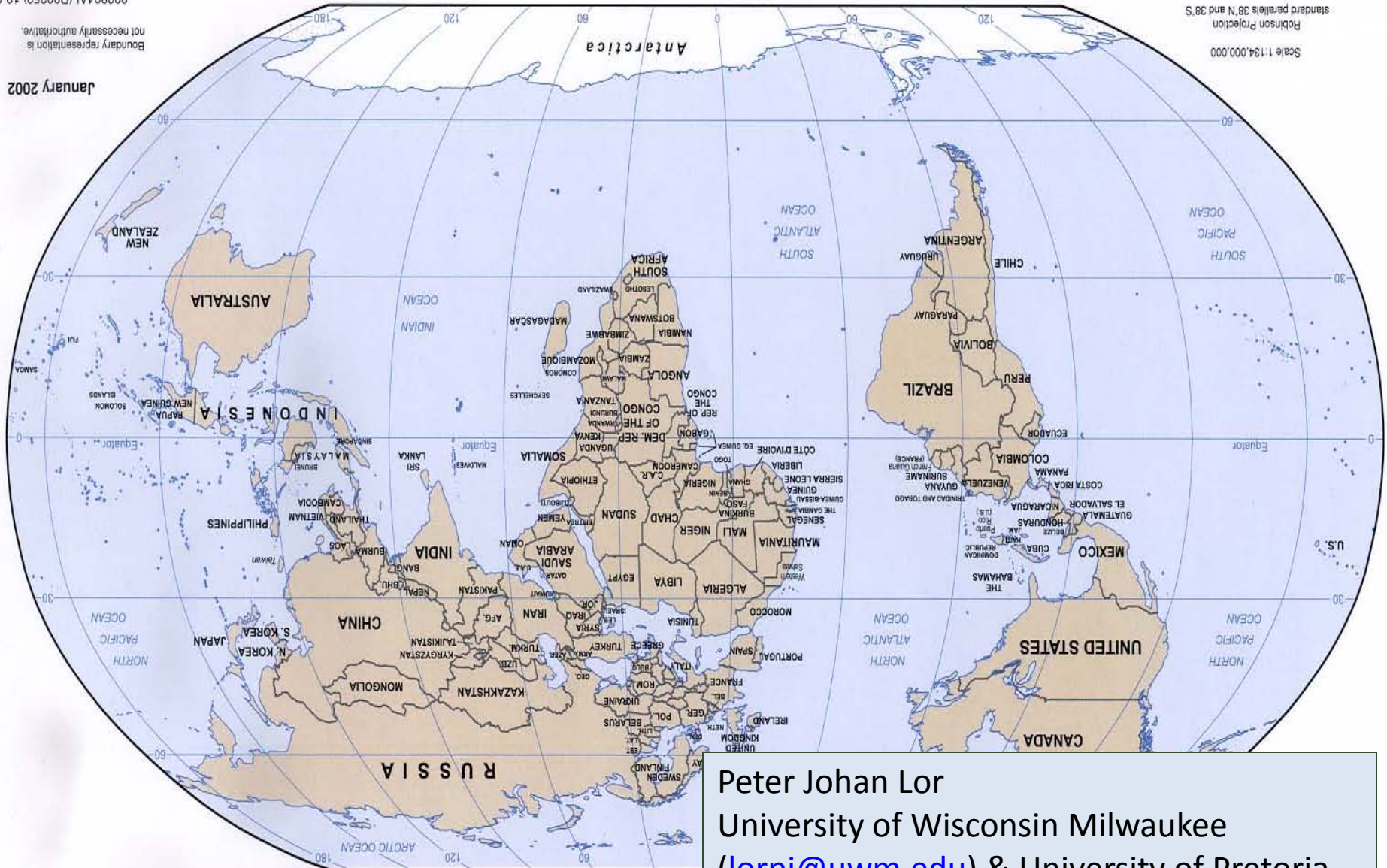
- Librarians have moral responsibility to –
 - be aware and keep informed of issues of information justice, particularly as they relate to North-South relations
 - critically scrutinize N-S projects (impact, sustainability)
 - raise awareness of library users (home & visitors)
 - advocate for information justice
 - advocate for open access
 - participate in advocacy for information justice, through their library associations and IFLA

802804A1 (R00352) 12-01

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January 2002

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Robinson Projection
standard parallels 38°N and 38°S



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