

Mind the Gap:
Global South Philosophies of Science

Aim:

The Mind the Gap Project is committed to addressing disparities between the so-called “Global South”¹ and the “Global North” in the field of philosophy of science. The aim is to shed light on the intellectual contributions of underrepresented philosophers from the Global South who work and publish in languages other than English. For feasibility purposes, the initial stages of the project will focus on philosophers working in Spanish and Portuguese. The primary goal of this project is to promote the visibility, recognition and appreciation of these scholars, their unique perspectives, and their valuable insights within the philosophy of science.

Background:

Spanish is the fourth most widely spoken language in the world and Portuguese is the ninth². The biggest concentration of Spanish and Portuguese speakers is found in Latin America, also more broadly known as part of the Global South. Yet, there is a striking underrepresentation of Latin American scholars in the field of philosophy of science (Yen and Hung 2019). Similarly, academic articles published in Spanish or Portuguese receive little to no attention in the mainstream English-language literature and publishing circles.

The underrepresentation of philosophers from the Global South, particularly those publishing in languages other than English, can be attributed to several interconnected factors tied to the history of colonization. Such marginalization can be associated with the history of colonialism and the establishment of hierarchies of knowledge, whereby knowledge produced in the Global South has often been dismissed as “inferior” or less worthy of consideration.

Therefore, epistemic decolonization underscores the need to decenter Western epistemological paradigms to incorporate diverse perspectives. Despite growing attention to the imperative of decolonization, systemic barriers persist in academic publishing, where research predominantly conducted in English often receives more attention and recognition.

Publication bias further exacerbates this issue, as journals and academic platforms tend to prioritize English-language contributions, creating an inherent bias against non-English research. Furthermore, a [recent study published in Nature](#)³ highlights the additional barriers that non-English speakers face to engage in academic discourse in English. Additionally, uneven distribution of funding over the globe as well as currency disparities entail that academic mobility (such as conference attendance) are compounding factors that perpetuate such disparities in the representation of knowledge (Fernández Pinto 2021; Krawczyk and Kulczycki 2021).

¹ I don't think the term Global South is an innocent category or that it comes without issues. I also do think it is sometimes used to mark an even deeper divide between North and South. After discussing with many colleagues, I have settled on keeping this term *for now*, since it is the “state-of-the-art” term at the moment.

² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/266808/the-most-spoken-languages-worldwide/>

³ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02320-2>

Draft project description

An excuse I often hear not to engage with scholarly works in Spanish or Portuguese is: “but I don’t speak the language”. It is my firm belief that nowadays, with AI technologies such as DeepL and ChatGPT it has never been easier to read works in languages other than English. Using those technologies to foster greater diversity is a great way to promote visibility of Latin American scholars and contribute towards the goal of epistemic decolonization.

Approach:

The Mind the Gap project will contribute to bridge this divide by creating an organized directory of philosophers of science who are primarily Spanish or Portuguese speakers. Up to this stage, this is a one-woman project (me!). For the feasibility of the project, I will initially focus on Latin American philosophers working and publishing in Spanish or Portuguese. Hopefully (and if I can get more people on board with the project) I will be able to expand the project to include other geographical areas that are typically underrepresented.

Here are the stages of the project:

Stage	Description	Timeline
1 – Data collection	This will be the first phase of the project and the aim is to collect data about scholars and their research projects. I will organize this data according to keywords that will enable an easy search mechanism. The sign-up form will be available shortly.	January – July 2024
2 – Building the directory	My aim is to create a webpage where I can organize the data collected into topics of interest. For example, if you are someone working on the concept of “homology”, you should be able to look-up “homology” as a keyword and find scholars working and publishing on the topic that may be writing in Spanish or Portuguese.	July – December 2024 (I might need the help of a programmer to help me with my vision for the website!)
3 – Dissemination and outreach strategies	In this stage, I aim to give the project visibility through workshops at the main Philosophy of Science conferences.	2025 (ongoing)

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Useful online resources:

(I am still working on this list and hopefully once the directory is up I will be able to feed this list often)

- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy's entry on [Philosophy of Science in Latin America](#).
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy's entry on [Philosophy of Biology in Latin America](#).