

Benjamin Hennig maps out the global production and distribution levels for diamonds

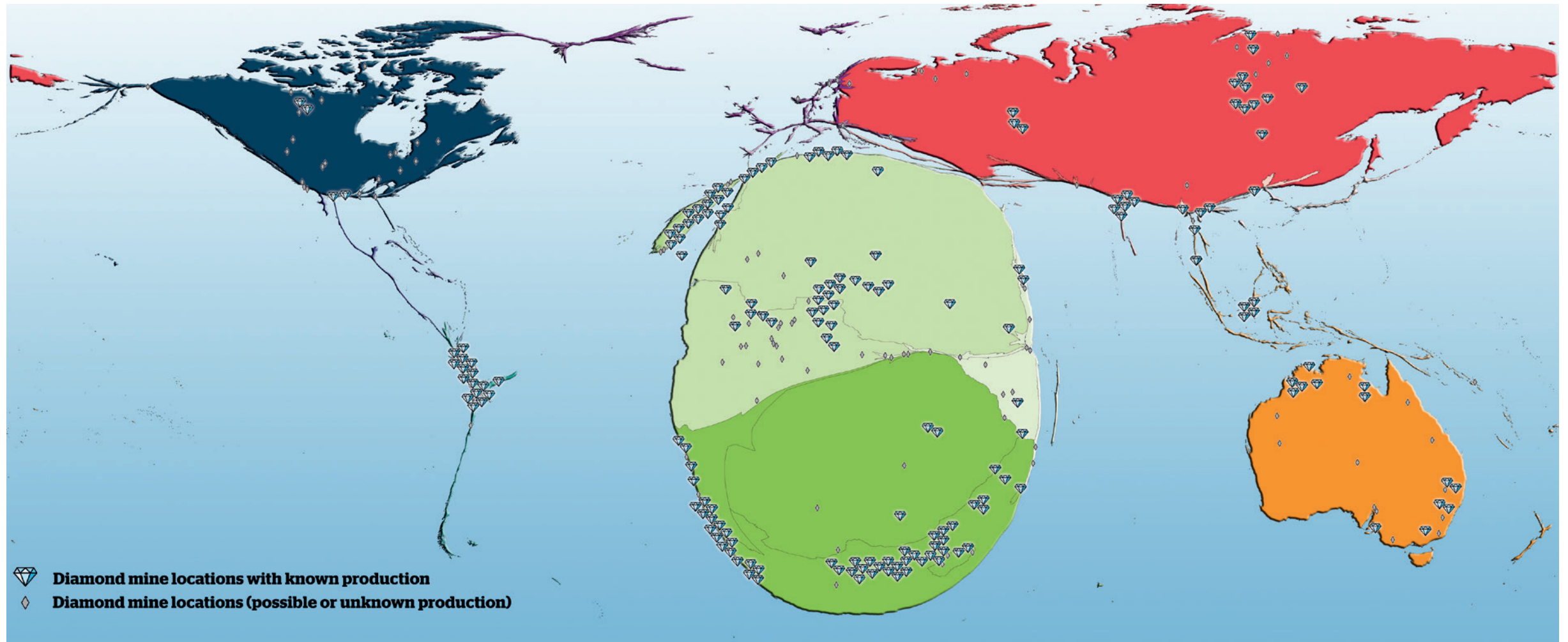
Due to its distinct geologic conditions for their formations, the occurrence of diamonds is confined to around 35 countries in the world. While nations such as Australia, India, and Canada focus more on mining industrial diamonds, African countries such as Botswana and South Africa are better known for their production of gem diamonds. Diamond mining activities in many African countries are often also linked to conflicts and controversial human rights conditions.

According to data collected by the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), which covers an about 99.8 per cent of global diamond production, 134 million carats of diamonds worth \$12.4billion were produced in 2016. This most recent figure is slightly up from the average annual production since the start of the financial crisis in 2008.

Volume and value of diamond production vary between countries. However, the overall picture where diamonds are mined remains similar at a global level. The main cartogram here shows the countries of the world resized according to the total diamond production by volume. Southern and Central Africa dominate the global picture as a diamond producing region, while Russia is the largest single producing country. Other major producers are Canada and Australia.

The cartogram also shows additional information about the location of mines collected in the first comprehensive global database of diamonds. The database was compiled with support of the Peace Research Institute Oslo to better understand the role of diamonds in armed civil conflicts, such as in Sierra Leone and Angola where diamonds are used to finance wars.

The locations of mines shown also reveals areas which currently have little production and are therefore hardly visible in the distorted map. Brazil especially stands out: as one of the very



The Diamond

first countries where diamonds were mined as early as the 1700s, it now contributes less than one per cent of the world's production but has a large accumulation of old mines that provide potential for a revival in mining.

The global picture of diamond trade shows that commercial activity and the redistribution of the finished luxury or industrial products takes place in very different parts of the world – these are usually not the producing countries that are shown in the country cartogram of diamond production.

The cartogram to the right shows all countries that import diamonds in the value of \$500million and above. All countries importing diamonds worth over \$1billion are shown with their import value. As the proportional circles show, North America, Europe (via Belgium) the Middle East, and Asia (via Hong Kong and India) are the major

hubs in the global diamond trade, while diamond producing countries play next to no role in these networks.

These cartograms highlight the controversial role of highly valuable mineral resources and financial investment and trading activities. While diamonds are largely found in the poorest (and sometimes conflict-ridden) regions of the planet, their role as an investment in economically unstable times on the global markets shapes some of the most prosperous hubs of the financial world. ●

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Dimensions

Global Diamond Imports

Countries importing diamonds worth more than \$500million

