



Engaged Scholarship as a Foundation of Academic Belonging

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In this paper, I will reflect on my experience of partial belonging within Dutch academia as a refugee from Iran, through the lens of my evolving vision and practice of engaged scholarship. I will discuss how my understanding of engaged scholarship was initially shaped by (Black) feminist epistemology and critical theory. Later, Indigenous scholarship played a pivotal role in helping me reconceptualize engagement in a more transformative way—one that centres community-based knowledges. I will delve deeper into the key elements of what I will describe as transformative engaged scholarship, which places epistemic justice at its core and embraces the meaningful co-creation of diverse forms of knowledge as its central methodology. At the same time, it involves creating caring and safe environments within academia, especially for younger scholars who, for various reasons, feel excluded from dominant academic practices. To illustrate this, I will present examples from our research and our collaborative challenges, highlighting the significance of this form of engaged scholarship as a support structure against exclusionary practices—both within academia and in society at large.