

Witold Mucha

*Institute for Social
Science, Heinrich-Heine
University Duesseldorf,
Duesseldorf.*

E-mail:

witold.mucha@hhu.de

Maximilian Wegener

*Chair of International
Security Policy,
Zeppelin University
Friedrichshafen,
Friedrichshafen.*

E-mail:

maximilian.wegener@zu.de

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No voice for the Global South – analysing the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA)

The article contributes to the postcolonial and decolonial debate on epistemic inequality in International Relations (IR) research by analysing the global representation of universities at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association in Toronto in 2019. The results are fourfold. First, the overwhelmingly represented Western countries are mostly located at universities in North America and Europe. Second, universities located in Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) are largely underrepresented compared to their population size and number of universities. Third, even in so-called Global South panels, the representation of scholars from the Global North is much higher than that of academics from the Global South. Fourth, the representation gap also holds true when analysing researcher mobility and individual publication records. The implications of the case study results shed light on the difficulties of analysing epistemic violence without contributing oneself to the prevalent asymmetries.

Keywords: Epistemic inequality, knowledge production, postcolonial and decolonial studies, International Relations, North-South divide

Introduction

Much has been written on epistemic inequality in International Relations (IR) (Spivak 1988; Vázquez 2011; Garbe 2013; Castro-Gómez and Martin 2002; Brunner 2021; Demeter 2020; Tripathi 2021; Sharma 2021; De Sousa Santos and Meneses 2020; Murray 2020; Moyo 2020; Andrews 2020; Sabaratnam 2020; Smith and Tickner 2020). However, only a few analyses have substantiated the normative critique against power asymmetries in global knowledge production based on empirical material (Sharman and Weaver 2013; Morley 2016; Briggs and Weathers 2016; Pereira 2017; Maliniak et al. 2018; Mucha and Pesch 2019; Lohaus and Wemheuer-Vogelaar 2021). This paper contributes to that debate by analysing the global representation of universities at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA) in Toronto in 2019: which universities and their scholars have been represented at the convention as authors, chairs, and discussants and in what proportion? Making use of an ISA event as a case study for analysis is fruitful in three regards. First, the conference is selected as an empirical basis because of its kudos in the discipline. Presenting papers and networking at ISA is deemed conducive to a successful academic career in IR (Acharya 2016; Breuning and Lu 2010). Second, in its 10th year of operation, the ISA's Global South Caucus (GSCIS), which aims to "promote the ISA as a forum for the dissemination of cross-regional global south research", has praised the 2019 Toronto Convention for its success in terms of representation (GSCIS 2020: 1). Third, while there are some studies focusing on (primarily female) under-representation at academic conferences in different disciplines (Nyúl et al. 2021; Falk and Hagsten 2022), there has been no comparable research done in IR. The few scholars empirically addressing the so-called Global South versus Global North representation debate have mostly dealt with publication records (Sharman and Weaver 2013; Kristensen 2015; Maliniak et al. 2018; Lohaus and Wemheuer-Vogelaar 2021). In light of that research gap, the paper will discuss the implications of the case study results from a postcolonial and decolonial perspective. Advocates of the debate have criticised the suppression of the academic voice of the so-called Global South (Mignolo 2009; Grosfoguel 2007; Acharya 2016; Mitova 2020; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, 2021). Knowledge produced in the South does not get the chance to be appreciated at conferences such as ISA or at major publishing houses (Acharya 2016; Wæver 1998). While there are many ways in which potential inequalities can be examined, few studies have thus far shed light on international academic conferences to address the issue of representation.

The case study will be based on a dataset of 1 180 roundtables and panels and 5 664 scholars listed in the 2019 Toronto convention. The so-called Global South will be conceptualised as all countries that are not members of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Building on the descriptive data,

the results are fourfold. First, regardless of their role as paper-giver, discussant, or chair, scholars based at OECD (90%) and in particular at Northern American (52%) and European (32%) universities dominate the convention. Second, this asymmetry is paralleled in events that specifically deal with Global South-related topics where non-OECD based scholars are largely underrepresented. Third, the biographic analysis of scholars participating in those panels (n=1 030) confirms the inequality both in terms of researcher mobility as well as publication records in the top 10 ranked IR journals. Fourth, the BRICS countries resemble the Global South/Global North divide. Although Brazil (no. 5) and India (no. 12) seem to be among the higher-ranked university sites represented at ISA, the absolute number of scholar appearances remains low considering population size and number of national universities in total.

The findings have three major implications. First, the case study data supports the postcolonial and decolonial critique against epistemic inequality in global knowledge production. Second, the asymmetry is deeper than expected considering that most likely candidates for closing that gap such as universities based in the BRICS countries only represent 6% of the total number of attendees. Against this backdrop, the GSCIS's hope of a "well represented" Global South at the ISA has not yet been fully achieved (GSCIS 2020: 1). The 2019 Toronto ISA Convention demonstrates the opposite. Third, by using the 2019 ISA convention in Toronto as a case study, we demonstrate that it is worthwhile looking at major academic events when interested in the global representation of IR voices. In doing so, this article aims to contribute towards the theoretical and normative debates on epistemic inequality in IR, thereby engaging in a critical (self-) reflection on our discipline's notions of diversity, representation, (in)visibility, quality and 'the global'.

Epistemic inequality in global IR

In postcolonial and decolonial studies, epistemic violence refers to "(...) the very contribution to violent societal conditions that is rooted in knowledge itself: in its formation, shape, set-up, and effectiveness. (...) Epistemic violence is deeply embedded in our knowledge as well as in the ways [on] which we strive towards it" (Brunner 2013: 228-229). As an omnipresent dimension of any system of knowledge, it is permanently inherent in the way knowledge is produced and reproduced. The notion of epistemic violence refers to epistemological, theoretical, conceptual, methodological as well as political, institutional, and economic dimensions of the sociology of knowledge (Spivak 1988; Mignolo 2009; Grosfoguel 2007; Brunner 2021). In this article, epistemic violence will be synonymously used with the notions of epistemic inequality and epistemic

injustice which have both been understood as conditions under which epistemic discrimination suffered by a knower becomes an epistemic injustice (Fricker 2007). While much of the literature has investigated discrimination against scholars' capacities as knowers based on prejudices about the speakers, such as gender, social background, ethnicity, race, sexuality, tone of voice, accent, and others, this article feeds into Canaparo's (2009) notion of "geo-epistemology". The concept refers to his finding that scholars' geographical location is likely to shape their research and representation in the field.

The concept of epistemic inequality is embedded in the sociology of science. The subdiscipline equates truth and benefit with knowledge and power. According to Bacon (1620), power is not understood in the conventional sense, but as a capacity to act. Against this background, the ability to act is socially constructive. This hints at the possibility to set things in motion or to prevent them – whether it is to assess facts or to defend a hypothesis against other facts. In this respect, the ability to act should not be misunderstood as a possibility to perform exclusively material-physical services such as riding a bicycle, selling shares, or taking part in a protest march. Rather, capacity to act also refers to intellectual abilities: the compilation of statistics on the arrival of irregular migrants on South African soil would be an example of this. Accordingly, knowledge can create, maintain, and change existential conditions, since statistics not only reflect social realities but can also problematise social reality. Regardless of the often undifferentiated equation of power and knowledge in standard works of social sciences, the link refers to the function of science for society. Researchers can claim to create and communicate to the (academic) public knowledge that can steer the development of society. Not least the controversial debates on climate change or Covid-19 denialism illustrate the impetus of knowledge as a power resource. Knowledge and its sociality are not exclusively limited to social function systems in modern societies (Luhmann 2002: 98). Knowledge holds an anthropological constant as it constantly influences societies and their members. Blumenberg (1966) concludes that the consciousness and lives of people represent realities that only come into being and are shaped by knowledge. In other words, reality is dependent on scientific knowledge. In this respect, Luhmann's (2002) reference to the universality of knowledge and its production serves as a theoretical bridge between the sociological assumption of knowledge on the one hand and the interest of postcolonial and decolonial studies in the Global South on the other.

A major part of the representation debate focuses on the epistemic injustice against women, people of colour, and disabled people in academia. The first branch overwhelmingly deals with the need for gender equality plans and the practical implications of such policies (Medina 2013; Fotaki 2013; Morley 2016; Pereira 2017;

Phull et al. 2019). Research on racial discrimination and racialised knowledge production mainly analyses the structural obstacles regarding career progress and career trajectories (Medina 2013; Thapar-Björkert and Farahani 2019). Studies on epistemic discrimination against disabled people investigate the features of disabled life that, because they shape the processes through which knowledge is gathered, evaluated, judged, and disseminated, also influence the ways in which epistemic injustice is experienced (Leach Scully 2018; Young et al. 2019; Reynolds 2020). Despite the overlaps with research seeking to trace epistemic inequality from a Global South perspective (Chimakonam 2017; Crawford et al. 2021), there has been virtually no comparative empirical research in that literature branch that focuses on the representation of scholars in academia. The research gap is particularly wide when looking into the authorship of academic knowledge production (Mucha and Pesch 2019; Lohaus and Wemheuer-Vogelaar 2021). Studies on the community as research object have rather examined citation patterns, theory pluralism, or performance indicators (Müller and De Rijke 2017; Saideman 2018; Hamati-Ataya 2018). Wæver's (1998) "comparative sociology" of IR is the only exception in this regard. Based on a sample of American, British, and European top journals between 1970 and 1995, he found that these journals have been exclusively dominated by authors from these regions, with almost none representing scholars based in other parts of the world (Wæver 1998).

Early research on the exclusion of southern-based knowledge has been mostly done from an Anglo-American perspective. As soon as 1977, Hoffmann argued that IR as a discipline has been an "American Social Science" right from the beginning. His findings have been substantiated in two ways. First, studies show that United States-based scholars account for a large share of research output in the field. Turton (2016) problematises the dominant institutional position as it facilitates the consolidation of citation networks by referencing each other's work rather than research produced elsewhere. This is in line with Wæver (1998), who sees advantage for scholars from the United States "because their approaches typically will be better rewarded, offer access to more prestigious journals, and thus result in materially superior jobs" (Wæver 1998: 723). Second, Maliniak et al. (2018) demonstrate on the basis of the global Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) survey that scholars based in the United States are comparatively much more appreciated by peers from other world regions: "US universities train a disproportionately high percentage of IR scholars worldwide, and US scholars and journals command significant respect. Across the globe, IR scholars see the profession as dominated by the US academy" (Maliniak et al. 2018: 451). Kristensen (2015) supports these findings by analysing bibliometric data in key journals. Apparently, scholars based at top institutions in the United States publish many more articles in high-ranked journals than their peers

elsewhere (Kristensen 2015: 247). Hendrix and Vreede (2019) conclude in this regard that “the United States is the three-hundred-thousand-pound blue whale of IR scholarship” (Hendrix and Vreede 2019: 310).

The postcolonial and decolonial critique against the exclusion of southern-based knowledge from standard IR has been based on three interwoven rationales. First, scholars address the need for diversity in terms of epistemic equality. Second, scholars point to the additional knowledge and thus quality of data that can be produced by less exclusive epistemological practices and structures (Agnew 2007; Wæver and Tickner 2009; Canaparo 2009; Hobson and Sajed 2017; Tickner 2013; Lake 2016; Acharya 2016; Turton 2016; Tucker 2018; Mantz 2019; Colgan 2019; Murray 2020; Patel 2020; Chadha Behera 2021). Third, other studies deal with ways to change prevalent asymmetries such as in higher education (Andrews 2020; Khoo et al. 2020; Mitova 2020; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, 2021). Conceptually, mechanisms of epistemic exclusion or marginalisation most often refer to authors based in the so-called “periphery” (Tickner 2013; Turton 2016). In this respect, Lake (2016) stresses the benefit of additional knowledge by diversifying the perspectives and voices in the debate. Assessing the authorship of scholars in Global IR is difficult, though, given the lack of information in “non-dominant and non-privileged parts of the world” (Wæver and Tickner 2009: 1; Kristensen 2015; Blaney and Tickner 2017). Beyond the challenges of access to information and data, in terms of diversity, the IR field is neither uniformly globalised nor purely local (Agnew 2007; Wæver and Tickner 2009; Tickner 2013; Chadha Behera 2021; Sharma 2021). In this regard, Acharya (2016) stresses the need for a global approach that “(...) urges the IR community to look past the American and Western dominance of the field and embrace greater diversity, especially by recognising the places, roles, and contributions of ‘non-Western’ peoples and societies” (Acharya 2016: 4). The diversity imperative is in line with Lake’s (2016) argument that theoretical and methodological reasoning are shaped by scholars’ experiences within the field. In other words, cognitive frames and biases determine what is being studied and what is being deemed accurately analysed based on standard quality criteria (Colgan 2019). This observation echoes the above-mentioned debates in postcolonial and decolonial studies. Regarding this article, Canaparo’s (2009) critique against “geo-epistemology” refers to his finding that the scholars’ geographical location is likely to shape their research – in all its facets from theoretical to methodological design: “what is relevant is not the semantic accuracy and pertinence of a particular concept but how it will fit the ‘Guidelines for Authors’ of a particular publication or publishing house” (Canaparo 2009: 21; Wæver and Tickner 2009; Tickner 2013; Turton 2016; Wemheuer-Vogelaar and Peters 2016; Collyer 2018).

Case study: data and methods

The Annual ISA Convention in Toronto in 2019 serves as an empirical basis for analysis here. Held between 27 and 30 March 2019, in total 5 664 academics participated in 1 180 panels and roundtables. With more than 6 500 members (representing more than 100 countries), the ISA can be considered, as pointed out on the ISA website, as the “most respected and widely known scholarly association” in the field of IR (ISA 2022). Its annual conferences are among the largest international gatherings of IR scholars from all over the world which renders an in-depth examination of its composition all the more relevant. As the last non-virtual, pre-pandemic conference held under the roof of the ISA, the 2019 Convention in Toronto therefore constitutes an insightful set of data in order to analyse the representation of scholars at one of the ‘flagship meetings’ in the field.

In light of dependency theory thinking (Grosfoguel 2007; Tickner 2013), the analysis of epistemic inequality at ISA distinguishes between the dominant and agenda-setting centre of knowledge production on the one hand and the largely silent periphery comprising subaltern and marginalised voices on the other. The former category can be characterised as the so-called Global North generally labelled the West while the latter is referred to as the so-called non-Western Global South. These Southern voices are located within the margins of academia and therefore stand in contrast to the dominant (North-)Western bloc situated at the centre of academic knowledge production. In order to distinguish knowledge produced at ISA either by scholars representing the non-Western Global South or academics representing the Global North, this analysis operates along two categories: theme and geography. A conference panel, for instance, dealing with “Postcolonial Perspectives Towards Statehood and Global Politics” implies profound relevance and involvement for Southern perspectives. Hence, *on thematic grounds*, that panel can be considered an arena for scholars of the Global South. Similarly, a conference panel with the title “The Agency and Influence of African Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations” presupposes expertise about politics of and for African countries and its populations. Thus, *on geographical grounds*, one could reasonably expect a high number of scholars employed at Sub-Saharan African universities to take active roles in that context. The defining dichotomy of dominant and marginalised voices within IR is operationalised via two dimensions: on the one hand, all panels and roundtables of the Toronto conference will be analysed (n=1 180). On the other hand, there will be a close look at selected panels which, on both thematic as well as geographical grounds, can be considered particularly relevant from a Southern perspective (n=169). In order to address the guiding research question on the representation of scholars, the analysis proceeds along four steps.

First, all 1180 panels and roundtables of the 2019 ISA conference are analysed with regard to the geographical background of the 5 664 listed participants. At which universities are the scholars employed? In which countries are those universities based? The aim is to draw a full picture of global representation considering all scholars attending the 2019 conference in Toronto. Second, all participants (through the tracing of their home institutions and, by extension, countries of residence) are categorised as either Western/Northern or non-Western/Southern by applying the current membership status within the OECD. In other words, the current 37 OECD member states are conceptualised as the Northern bloc within IR while the remaining non-OECD countries are subsumed under the umbrella term 'Global South'. This dichotomic distinction is based upon the OECD's aspiration and self-image of representing an influential club of countries on a global scale (OECD 2020). While the organisation's aim is to "to build better policies for better lives [through fostering] prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all" (OECD 2020), the far-reaching discrepancies in power, influence, authority, relevance, and status between OECD and non-OECD member states remain significant (Economou et al. 2017). Moreover, defining the 37 OECD member states as Global North does not contrast much with the ISA's GSCIS's understanding. The caucus defines the Global South as those countries that belong to "Africa, developing Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East/North Africa, the Pacific, and South and Southeast Asia" (GSCIS 2021). Strictly speaking, the OECD member states Turkey, Mexico, Chile, Israel, Colombia, and Costa Rica would not belong to the Global North according to the GSCIS. However, this discrepancy is negligible given the marginal attendee numbers of scholars based at universities in those countries at the ISA in 2019.

Third, the special status of universities and scholars based in emerging and newly industrialised countries like China, Russia, India, Brazil, and South Africa is acknowledged. Against the backdrop of dependency theory and its notion of semi-peripheries inclined either to the centre or the periphery, the analysis takes into consideration the participants based in the so-called BRICS countries as a specific group of players in the academic arena. This intermediate category is necessary to account for the multifaceted power imbalances between OECD countries, non-OECD countries, and BRICS countries – in terms of political and geostrategic power, economic strength, symbolic and cultural dominance, epistemic influence, and academic relevance, respectively. Analysing the BRICS attendee rate is important as their universities and scholars would be expected to be the most likely candidates for closing the representation gap towards the OECD-based colleagues. A look into the share of BRICS-based scholars is fruitful when analysing those panels that explicitly deal with 'non-Western/Global South' related topics (here: "Panels on the Global South").

Considering the focus on context-specific geography and theme as well as the relevance of locally produced knowledge, a larger proportion of non-OECD academics would be expected in those sessions than in the overall pool of events. On the one hand, those panels which are explicitly dealing with non-OECD countries and regions (*geographical category*) are being considered. On the other hand, those panels that have a clear thematic focus on postcolonial and decolonial structures, subaltern voices and marginalised perspectives (*thematic category*) are examined. These two analytical steps unfold by comparing the roles ascribed to participants as chairs, discussants, or paper-givers. Applying these three categories, the participants' geographical background is integrated with their role in the respective panel. In doing so, the ascription of authority, expertise, and representation within the sphere of academic knowledge production can be evaluated in a more substantial manner. This specifically holds true for contexts in which actors and themes of the Global South are explicitly placed on the agenda. From an analytical point of view, in particular the share of paper-givers is meaningful as submitting an abstract prior and presenting a paper during the conference comes with a greater degree of involvement and a higher workload than being selected as chair or discussant.

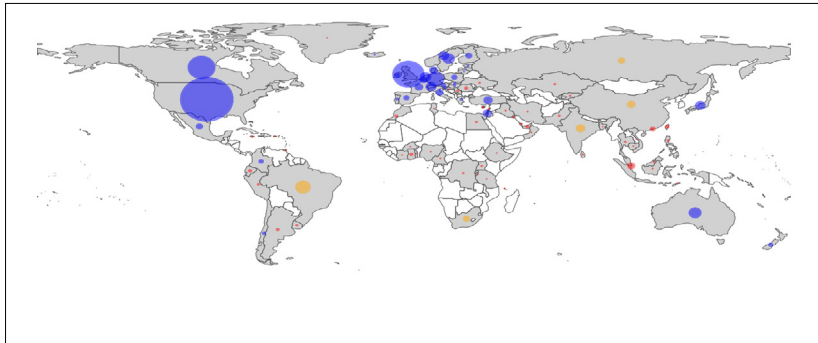
Fourth, in the attempt to refine those overall results, the selected panels (n=169) will be analysed with regard to researcher mobility and publication record. On the one hand, the goal will be to trace the educational backgrounds of the respective 1 030 paper-givers. This will help to understand what share of scholars acquired their first degrees in non-OECD countries and then did their PhD in OECD-based universities (or vice versa). On the other hand, the publication lists of those scholars will be analysed in order to show whether their work has been published in the top 10 ranked journals in IR (i.e. American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, International Organization, Political Analysis, British Journal of Political Science, Perspectives on Politics, Journal of Peace Research, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Quarterly Journal of Political Science, International Security). Looking into researcher mobility and publication records of the 1 030 Global South panel paper-givers will help to understand the overall analysis of all 5 664 attendees at the ISA in Toronto in 2019. In other words, is the likely finding of underrepresentation of the Global South at the conference also being reflected in the scholars' publication records and educational backgrounds?

Case study: findings

The expected assumption of epistemic inequality in Global IR is confirmed on the basis of the ISA 2019 data. The number of participants from OECD countries is 5 108 (90%), while 359 (6%) are participants from the BRICS countries and only

197 (4%) are participants from countries belonging to the non-OECD category. This is in accordance with our expectations as the overwhelming number of OECD-based participants corresponds with the dominance of North American and European universities (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Global Representation



Source: Own illustration based on ISA 2019.

The asymmetry becomes more evident when analysing the representation of the top 25 ranked countries where the attending scholars have been based. Within the Top 25, except for the five BRICS countries and Singapore as the only non-OECD state, all other countries are part of the OECD. The number of participants from these 25 countries alone make up 5 338 of the 5 664 total attending scholars. Overall, there is a strong Anglo-American dominance within the ranking: 3 861 scholars were based at universities in the United States (2 317), United Kingdom (817), Canada (606), and Australia (121) (i.e. 68%). It is not surprising that the United States holds the greatest number of participants at 2 317. Although there is a case to be made for geographical proximity being an important factor (e.g. transportation costs), the United Kingdom is ranked second with 817 attending scholars, while host country Canada is represented by only 606 participants. There is also a striking dominance by countries of North America and Europe, specifically Western and Northern Europe, being at the top of the list. Ranked in the Top 10, scholars based at universities in Germany (233), Sweden (109), the Netherlands (94), Switzerland (84), and Norway (79) constitute a share of around 11 % of the attending participants. There are differences within the OECD, though. For instance, Japan with 76 (no. 11), Turkey with 60 (no. 13), and Israel with 56 (no. 14) participants have been more frequently represented than countries in Europe such as France (no. 15), Belgium (no. 18), or Italy (no. 20). Against this backdrop, no clear picture can be drawn regarding intra-regional patterns. This is regardless

of studies discussing the anglophone dominance over the francophone use of language at conferences or publishing houses as one factor deterring scholars from submitting manuscripts (Acharya 2016; Faraldo-Cabana 2018; Lohaus and Wemheuer-Vogelaar 2021).

Table 1: Top 25 representation

| Country rank | Total number | Organisation | Population size | Number of universities |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. USA | 2 317 | OECD | 313 973 000 | 2 052 |
| 2. UK | 817 | OECD | 62 262 000 | 165 |
| 3. Canada | 606 | OECD | 33 487 208 | 147 |
| 4. Germany | 233 | OECD | 82 329 758 | 280 |
| 5. Brazil | 180 | BRICS | 198 739 269 | 176 |
| 6. Australia | 121 | OECD | 21 262 641 | 50 |
| 7. Sweden | 109 | OECD | 9 059 651 | 37 |
| 8. Netherlands | 94 | OECD | 16 715 999 | 46 |
| 9. Switzerland | 84 | OECD | 7 604 467 | 49 |
| 10. Norway | 79 | OECD | 4 676 305 | 22 |
| 11. Japan | 76 | OECD | 127 078 679 | 569 |
| 12. India | 63 | BRICS | 1 166 079 220 | 416 |
| 13. Turkey | 60 | OECD | 76 805 524 | 91 |
| 14. Israel | 56 | OECD | 7 233 701 | 24 |
| 15. France | 52 | OECD | 64 057 792 | 265 |
| 16. Denmark | 51 | OECD | 5 500 510 | 31 |
| 17. China | 48 | BRICS | 1 338 612 970 | 395 |
| 18. Belgium | 43 | OECD | 10 414 336 | 44 |
| 19. Singapore | 42 | non-OECD | 4 657 542 | 8 |

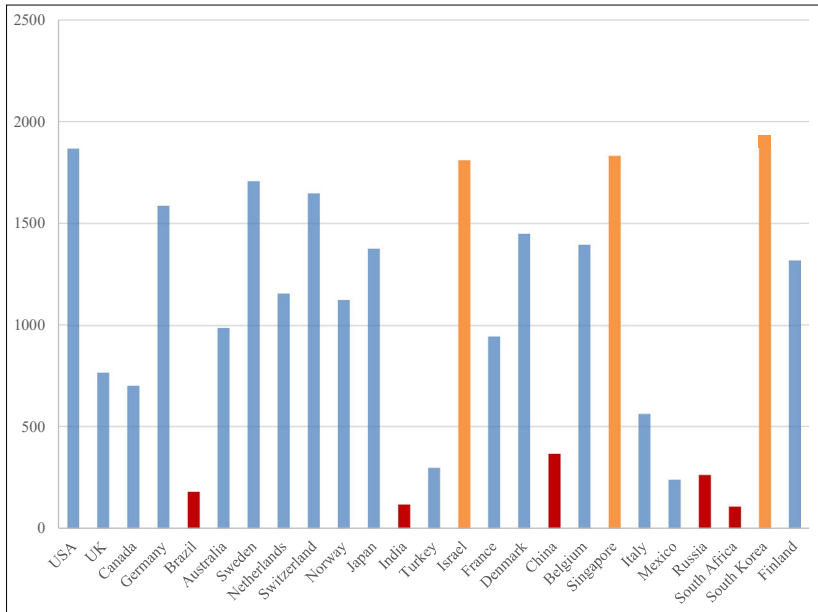
| Country rank | Total number | Organisation | Population size | Number of universities |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 20. Italy | 41 | OECD | 58 126 212 | 92 |
| 21. Mexico | 34 | OECD | 111 211 789 | 158 |
| 22. Russia | 34 | BRICS | 140 041 247 | 322 |
| 23. South Africa | 34 | BRICS | 49 052 489 | 25 |
| 24. South Korea | 33 | OECD | 48 508 972 | 147 |
| 25. Finland | 31 | OECD | 5 250 275 | 32 |

Source: Own illustration based on Statista 2021.

The BRICS countries are all represented within the Top 25 ranking but not to the same degree. Brazil is the most striking outlier with 180 attending scholars ranked at fifth place. Similarly, India is high up at rank no. 12 with 63 attending scholars. However, these high rankings do not refute the epistemic inequality hypothesis made above. Both Brazil (213 million) and India (1.4 billion) have far larger populations than top-ranked states such as Canada (33 million), Sweden (9 million), or Switzerland (7 million). Moreover, there are more universities based in Brazil and India than in many of the other countries displayed in the ranking (see Table 3). India’s ranking (no. 12) among the Top 25 is illustrative in this regard. With a total population more than 10 times bigger and the number of universities more than twice as high as the United Kingdom’s (no 2; 14%), Indian scholars made up only one percent of attendees at the ISA Convention in Toronto in 2019. Apparently, their voices are not evenly represented compared to OECD countries. Russia, China, and South Africa are even further down the ranking. Their belonging to the Top 25 seems less substantial when factoring in their population size and their number of universities both in absolute and relative terms. As part of the BRICS club and the only African country within the Top 25, South Africa (no. 23) is represented by 34 participants. The number of participants from the entire region of Sub-Saharan Africa is 63. The voices of scholars from all other Sub-Saharan African countries combined are less represented than South African scholars. This is particularly striking from an epistemic inequality perspective given that IR and peace and conflict scholars traditionally focus on peripheral and formerly colonised regions and, as such, specifically study the region of Sub-Saharan Africa (Brunner 2013). Apparently, there is a glaring representation mismatch

between (Northern) scholars looking at Africa and (Southern) scholars working in Africa. However, the lack of representation of the BRICS and other emerging countries such as Mexico is not surprising when looking into the 2019 world ranking of investments on Research & Development (R&D) per capita. Rather, the cases of Singapore, South Korea, and Israel stand out in comparison to top-ranked countries such as the UK or Canada (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Research and development expenditure per capita, 2019



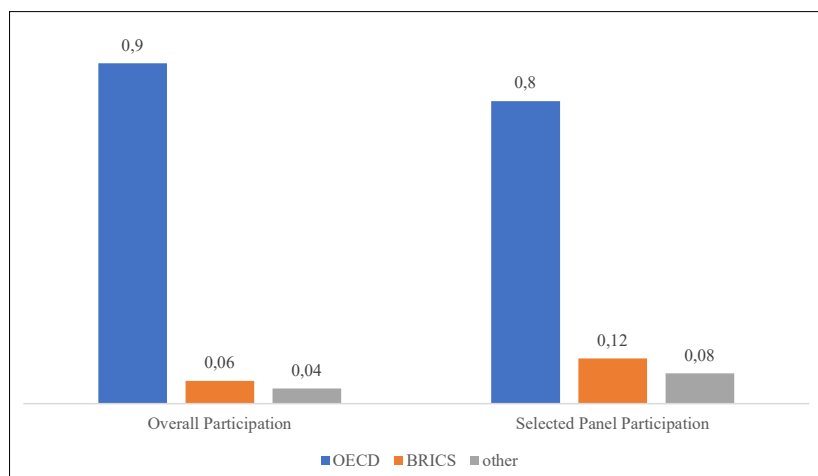
Source: Own illustration based on UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2019

Overall participation indicates that scholars from OECD countries are represented to a much greater degree than scholars from BRICS and non-OECD countries. The results also show that this occurs more often for panel discussants and panel chairs. However, the decision of who ends up with these roles is often based on a non-specific and non-transparent set of criteria. For instance, scholars might be asked to take up the role of the chair because they have had previous experiences with that role, or they were selected because of their specific expertise, or they set up the whole panel themselves. For the following analysis, it therefore seems more important to focus on the role of panel presenters rather than chairs or

discussants. In total, there is a slight deviation from the overall participation in favour of scholars from BRICS countries. However, the difference is marginal.

The analysis of the Global South Panels confirms the epistemic inequality hypothesis. One anecdotal example of such a panel is called “The Global South in Global Governance”. Of six panel presenters, five were based at OECD universities and the other belongs to the BRICS category. The analysis of the selected panels foregrounds that the number of panel presenters from BRICS and non-OECD countries is higher than the representation in all panels and roundtables (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Selected panels participants (n=169)



Source: Own illustration based on ISA 2019.

However, even when analysing the 169 Global South panels, the overall representation of scholars from OECD countries (80%) is still greater than that of scholars from BRICS (12%) and non-OECD countries (8%). The researcher mobility analysis of the 1 030 participants in those panels does not substantially differ from these findings: 13% of paper-givers who did their Bachelor’s and/or Master’s degree in non-OECD countries wound up doing their PhD at OECD-based universities. The Anglo-American dominance is confirmed as well. Of the 137 participants, most scholars did their PhD at universities based in the United States (69), United Kingdom (29), Canada (12), or Australia (9). In turn, only two percent (n=20) of the attending academics in the selected panels did their undergraduate and/or postgraduate studies at OECD universities and then did

their PhD degrees at non-OECD based universities. In terms of entirely non-OECD academic backgrounds, only 10% (n=103) of participants in the selected panels did their BA/MA/PhD studies in the Global South. The lack of global representation of those selected 1 030 paper-givers is further substantiated by analysing their publication records. Only 154 scholars (i.e. 15%) got their work published at least once in the top-10 ranked journals. Out of these only a dozen were able to successfully submit their papers more than once. Out of these only one person did her PhD at a non-OECD-based university and had been employed at a non-OECD-based university at the time the conference was held in Toronto. Perspectives on Politics (71), the Journal of Peace Research (35), and International Security (31) have published more manuscripts by scholars based in the Global South than publishers such as the American Journal of Political Science (9), Political Analysis (1) or the Quarterly Journal of Political Science (4). However, these differences do not tell anything about the submission frequency, decline, or inhouse review standards. Regardless, the analysis of researcher mobility and publication records substantiates the global epistemic inequality critique.

Discussion

Global South scholars are largely underrepresented compared to their colleagues based in the Global North. However, the findings require critical reflection regarding the implications beyond the case study. Three aspects are of particular significance in that regard: methodology, positionality, and structural asymmetry.

First, in terms of methodology we are aware that our conceptual categories and analytical distinctions entail limitations which may well be criticised. Some of the dichotomies are controversial (e.g. the North vs. the South, the West vs. the non-Western, and the centre vs. the periphery), since they reproduce the very generalisations and simplifications a post- and decolonial critique of the status quo aims to deconstruct. Scholars like Laffey and Nadarajah (2016) as well as Chandra (2013) criticise the simplicity and primordialism associated with these accounts. Such generalising terms ignore that it is academically impossible and ethically questionable to encapsulate more than 100 highly diverse nation-states as the less developed antipole to the so-called West. Indiscriminately and uncritically subsuming a great number of countries across continents under one label neglects the complexities and internal idiosyncrasies of every single one, thereby preserving the colonial continuities one seeks to problematise. In other words, distinguishing between the OECD, non-OECD, or BRICS categories runs the risk of reifying the Global North as the centre of knowledge production and the Global South as its periphery and consumer. Given both the general coloniality of power and the coloniality of knowledge (Quijano 2000), it is imperative to shed

light on the interrelations between those two categories to reflect on prevailing (post-)colonial continuities in the field of academic knowledge production (Mitova 2020; Ndlovu-Gatscheni 2018, 2021).

In line with Mignolo's notion of "geopolitics of knowledge" (2002), scholars such as Grovogui (2006) or Sajed (Hobson and Sajed 2017) present alternative definitions of the Global South, thereby encompassing marginalised communities (of people of colour, women, and migrants) in Western societies. Applying that intersectionality perspective to the analysis would mean to include the representation of predominantly marginalised institutions in the discipline (e.g. historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs)). Also, using BRICS as a category is worth criticising for its hegemonic nature vis-à-vis the outer groups. Taking R&D indicators as criteria for deeper analysis instead would certainly reveal that countries such as South Korea, Singapore, or Israel fare better than many countries listed in the OECD sample (e.g. UK, Canada, Australia). However, regardless of that justifiable critique against the simplified categorisation used in this article, neither a more refined Global South analysis nor a specific look into R&D or other indicators would change the overall results presented above. While one could easily think of different analytical distinctions (e.g. G7, NATO, EU), the OECD/non-OECD/BRICS framework, however, remains the most insightful for analysis. This is because of the multifactorial nature of the OECD as an international organisation. In general, OECD member states can be characterised as powerful and relatively dominant in comparison with their non-OECD counterparts – not only regarding economic criteria but also considering political, geostrategic, cultural, symbolic, and academic manifestations. Selecting BRICS as a semi-peripheral category is based on the assumption that universities in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa would be the most capable of closing the knowledge representation gap with OECD countries.

Second, with regard to positionality, academics tend to forget that general terminology like "developing countries" has historically been introduced and coined by the imperial and agenda-setting part of the world. In line with the postcolonial and decolonial critique against epistemic inequality in Global IR, the authors of this paper share Acharya's (2016) and others' discomfort with the prevailing status quo characterised by fundamental power imbalances and colonial continuities. By picking up and (re-) applying such categories, however, at least to some extent, we, as two white male Europeans, reproduce the existing epistemic rifts between the former colonisers and the formerly colonised; the voices that are being heard and those which are being ignored (Tuastad 2003; Brunner 2013, 2021). Given that the power of discourse is historically shaped by structures of epistemic violence, this article can merely exercise very limited power over discourse by making use of the hegemonic categories such as OECD,

BRICS, or North versus South. All the more important then, is awareness and (self-)critical reflection on the different implications of doing research as subject and object at the same time.

Third, other structural epistemic injustice factors such as funding mechanisms, hiring policies, or paper selection criteria are not considered in this article. The same holds true for analysing the total number of paper submissions or the deterrence effects caused by registration fees or visa policies in sending and receiving countries. Those hallmarks are as relevant as they are difficult to examine and therefore require in-depth attention by studies to come (e.g. through interviews with publishers and editors). The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the debate by giving a first look into uncharted empirical material on the global representation of scholars at ISA. Future comparative research based on previous ISA conferences is welcomed to analyse whether the 2019 Toronto findings resemble a historical status quo as identified in earlier studies such as Wæver's (1998) "comparative sociology".

Conclusion

The expected finding on epistemic inequalities at the 2019 ISA Convention in Toronto has been confirmed. Four aspects are particularly salient. First, the dominant OECD countries (90%) are overwhelmingly located at universities in North America and Europe. Except for Germany and Sweden (6%), the Anglo-American universities based in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia constitute by far the largest share of participants (68%). Second, the universities located in BRICS countries are largely underrepresented at the conference compared to their population size and number of universities. Third, even in the so-called Global South panels, the overall representation of scholars from the OECD (80%) remains much higher than that of academics from BRICS (12%) and non-OECD countries (8%). In other words, in those panels where Southern-based scholars would be expected to be particularly present and sharing insights, the marginalisation has been obvious. Fourth, this even holds true when analysing researcher mobility and individual publication records. Only 10% of scholars presenting papers at the Global South panels have done their BA, MA, and PhD studies in non-OECD based universities. Also, only 15% of those have published their work at least once in the top 10 ranked IR journals. In sum, the analysis reveals a highly selective perspective on IR knowledge that is being (re-)produced by scholars who are based at universities in the Global North. The voices of non-OECD-based academics in the field remain largely unheard. This is highly problematic from a postcolonial and decolonial perspective given that much of the IR and peace and conflict research focuses on the world regions in the Global South that are being underrepresented at academic 'flagship meetings'

like the ISA. The GSCIS's evaluation of a "well represented" Global South at the ISA Convention in Toronto in 2019 can at best be interpreted as hope for "[improving] employment and advancement opportunities for South-oriented scholars" (GSCIS 2020: 1). The 2019 convention demonstrates the opposite.

The findings hold several implications for further research. Adding past ISA conferences to the Toronto sample would most likely merely confirm the asymmetries identified in this paper. Rather, looking into similarly influential conventions in the field might be empirically insightful. For instance, major events under the umbrella of regional ISA conveners or associations such as the World International Studies Committee (WISC), the European Consortium for Political Science (ECPR), the Pan-European Conference on International Relations (EISA), or the International Political Science Association (IPSA) come to mind in this regard. It would also make sense to broaden the comparative analysis by integrating studies on the representation of scholars at major publishers such as Palgrave Macmillan or Routledge. Yet another angle poses the analysis of funding opportunities such as travel grants or registration fees. Given the rising costs of attending events such as the ISA, the ability to participate certainly depends on financial resources. This ranges from not only paying conference fees but also affording the expenses for travelling and staying in places such as Toronto, San Francisco, or Honolulu. While these research routes seem adequate for large-n analysis, the findings of this article also invite a qualitative approach. The article's analysis of the status quo of epistemic inequality in global IR addresses "what?" kind of asymmetry we see in academia. The question on the "why?", however, remains unsatisfyingly responded to in the literature. Against this backdrop, more qualitative research is necessary to trace and understand the gatekeeping functions and modalities of editors, reviewers, and generally peers in the field. Such an analysis would help to shed light on the academic standard criteria for "quality" in knowledge production in the field. Whose knowledge is deemed adequate by who based on what criteria developed by who? Addressing this question would have to be based on the self-reflective awareness by scholars of their ambivalent role as both subject and object in the global cycle of epistemic inequality.

The ISA's GSCIS and other flagship events seem like the appropriate places to discuss those questions of diversity and quality. For instance, one first operative step for ISA's GSCIS would need to be the transparent and regular publication of the background information of scholars who apply as well as of those who eventually attend conferences. Such publicly available data would be particularly useful for the 2020, 2021 and 2022 conventions in order to trace differences between virtual and non-virtual events. In other words, are virtual conferences more diverse when travel and accommodation costs do not play a

role? Regardless of the exceptional pandemic situation, the GSCIS and the ISA as a whole would make their call for representation and diversity more credible if they provided the research community with publicly available data on the application and attendance of scholars worldwide.

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