

## **De-Westernizing Communication Studies Through Domesticating the Global South: A Critical Examination of the Mechanisms Shaping Scholarly Participation in the Field**

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In light of scholarly critiques of the Western canon, this study aims to (1) identify the communication and media journals that most frequently publish work on “de-Westernization” and “Global South” topics, and (2) explore the academic paths of scholars who have written about inequities in the field. Based on a literature review and descriptive data, we assess the educational background and institutional affiliation of 437 scholars who authored 246 articles published between 1999 and 2023 in JCR-indexed communication journals. The findings reveal that most scholars engaging with these topics were educated in or affiliated with institutions in the Global North. In addition, while efforts to diversify perspectives in the field are commendable, they may unintentionally lead to tokenism, whereby few scholars are positioned to symbolically represent entire regions. We extend a provocative invitation to the field to critically examine whether—and how—academic knowledge production on de-Westernization and the Global South has been domesticated to conform to mainstream academic practices and frameworks.

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Claims to de-Westernize communication and media research have attracted considerable attention from academic associations, journal editors, and scholars alike (Chan et al., 2021; Comel et al., 2024; Dutta, 2020). The literature has discussed the need to include non-Western methodologies and theoretical frameworks to account for the plural media practices and phenomena worldwide, contributing to diversifying the geographical representation of authorship in high-impact academic journals (Cheruiyot & Ferrer-Conill, 2021; Freelon et al., 2023; Waisbord, 2022; Wang, 2010; Wasserman, 2018).

Nevertheless, the inclusion of scholars from the Global South within mainstream academic domains remains limited, primarily because of steady structural constraints (Comel et al., 2023; Ekdale et al., 2022). To illustrate, editorial boards of leading journals indexed in communication studies often lack geographical and institutional plurality (Goyanes & Demeter, 2020). Furthermore, researchers based in peripheral and semiperipheral countries face barriers often overlooked by their counterparts in Western Europe and the United States, such as expectations of English language proficiency and limited access to funding for conducting empirical research (Oliveira et al., 2021). Beyond concerns about the marginalization of knowledge from non-Western regions (Chan et al., 2021; Cherniak, 2021; Silva, 2021), studies highlight a prevailing tendency among scholars affiliated with Latin American and African universities to orient their research toward Northern academic paradigms, even when such frameworks and methodologies fail to capture the complexities of local contexts (Albuquerque, 2021; Collyer, 2016; Fox et al., 2021).

These barriers underscore a persistent imbalance in the global distribution of academic capital within communication and media studies, as only a few non-Western scholars participate in key scholarly forums and globally influential conferences (Asuman et al., 2025; Ekdale et al., 2022). On the one hand, the few Global South academics let through the gate may advocate for underrepresented geographic groups. On the other hand, scholars who successfully navigate established, high-profile academic spaces may find themselves compelled to align with research agendas and theoretical frameworks that primarily reflect the perspectives of the Global North, rather than those of their (original) regional contexts. As Chan et al. (2021) suggest, “non-U.S. scholars in developing countries at the periphery are compelled to adhere to the dominant ideology and its associated practices if they want to publish their work in the same journals” (p. 5274)—which ultimately encourages an emphasis on issues such as poverty, exoticism, and underdevelopment as characteristics of Global South societies (Bennett, 2014; Oliveira et al., 2021).

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to identify which communication and media journals most frequently engage with issues concerning “de-Westernization” and the “Global South” and map the intellectual trajectory of those scholars who have contributed to these discussions—whether by speaking about or on behalf of the Global South. Our article poses four research questions to examine the profiles of those who mediate the production and circulation of knowledge on the inequities discussed here:

*RQ1: Who are the authors who have successfully published on "de-Westernization" and "Global South" issues in prestigious academic outlets?*

*RQ2: In which institutions are they based?*

*RQ3: What is the educational background of such scholars?*

*RQ4: Which journals have demonstrated greater openness to engaging with calls for the de-Westernization of communication and media research?*

More precisely, we examine the academic performance and educational backgrounds of 437 scholars who authored 246 research articles published between 1999 and 2023 in communication and media journals indexed in Clarivate's *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR). Articles were included in the corpus based on the presence of at least one of the following terms in their titles, abstracts, or keywords: "Global South," "de-Westernization," "Westernized," and "de-Westernized."

Several factors underscore the relevance of this study. First, to the best of our knowledge, no prior research has systematically examined how Global North and Global South scholars engage with issues concerning de-Westernization (particularly when considering variables such as intellectual training and institutional affiliation). Second, a gap remains in the literature about the extent to which systemic conditions, such as training opportunities and institutional affiliation, influence the accumulation of academic capital through publication in high-impact journals. Third, we examine trends in published articles over the past 20 years, a time frame that enables us to draw consistent conclusions about unexplored aspects of academic knowledge production. Lastly, our article probes whether the calls for de-Westernization have been shaped by the perspectives of academics affiliated with institutions in the United States and Western Europe. Existing scholarship has consistently shown that most authors publishing in Q1 journals are based in North America and Europe. In light of this, it is critical to examine whether similar imbalances exist within the very studies that investigate academic inequities. If, on the one hand, this article does not seek to criticize Northern scholars who engage with Global South topics, on the other, a more equitable and representative academic landscape requires that voices and research agendas originating in the Global South occupy an autonomous and legitimate place in scientific knowledge production.

Therefore, while this study does not seek to establish causal inferences about authors' positionalities based solely on their institutional affiliations or educational backgrounds—an endeavor that would require a qualitative methodological approach beyond the scope of this analysis—the findings indicate that the majority of researchers in our corpus were educated at or are currently affiliated with universities in the Global North. This may be because authors employed by or trained in developed countries are more likely to be interested in the topic. However, as issues concerning the Global South are frequently addressed by scholars based in the Global North, there is a risk of reinforcing dynamics of exoticization or domestication, wherein Global South countries are treated primarily as sources of empirical data by researchers from the North. More specifically, we illuminate the mechanisms that shape and constrain the

diversity of perspectives within academic discourse, reassessing mainstream publishing practices in pursuit of a more genuine, inclusive, and equitable scholarly landscape.

### Literature Review

Calls to de-Westernize communication and media research emerge amid the rise of a multipolar world, where some intellectual communities from Global South countries increasingly challenge the Western-centric nature of existing theoretical and methodological paradigms (Herdin, 2012; Thussu, 2018; Vásquez et al., 2022).

While both concepts critique Western dominance, the Global South and de-Westernization occupy distinct positions in academic and political discourse. The Global South emerged amid the decline of socialism and the reconfiguration of the world system (previously divided into the first, second, and third worlds), signifying a collective identity for regions such as Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia, historically shaped by colonialism, economic exploitation, and persistent global asymmetries (Gelardi, 2020; Hoffmann, 2020; Ratuva, 2016). Specifically, the "Global South" rationale highlights the reproduction of global hierarchies, particularly through the international division of cognitive labor (Anievas & Martin, 2016; Müller, 2020). Despite efforts to reduce it to a symbolic label, the term continues to underscore shared narratives of marginalization and underdevelopment, as well as the enduring legacies of colonial and neocolonial structures (Lavallée, 2024; Mukherjee, 2020; Oliveira et al., 2021).

Accordingly, Demeter (2020) defines Global South countries as those geopolitically dependent or historically exploited, such as Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and parts of Asia. In contrast, the Global North comprises nations like the United States, the United Kingdom, Western Europe, Scandinavia, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea. These categories, however, are not internally homogeneous; for instance, the BRICS bloc (a group of five major emerging economies formed by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) is often viewed as semiperipheral—economically significant yet operating under more favorable conditions than other Global South intellectual communities (Bennett, 2014; Monteiro & Hirano, 2020). In response to such ambiguities, scholars have proposed alternative frameworks, including the Global East, which refers to post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. These regions occupy an ambivalent position: historically marginalized in global knowledge production yet frequently excluded from Global South/North dichotomies (Müller, 2020; Trubina et al., 2020). We argue that Demeter's (2020) classification remains relevant despite shifting geopolitical dynamics and the growing economic diversification of countries in the Global South. The enduring impact of colonialism and structural inequality continues to challenge our field's knowledge production practices, as other scholarly works have clarified (Brown et al., 2025; Lind et al., 2025).

In contrast, de-Westernization constitutes an epistemic and methodological project aimed at challenging the dominance of Western-centered theories in academic disciplines and policy making (Alahmed, 2020). It scrutinizes the uncritical application of Western epistemologies (across fields such as media studies, political science, and community psychology) for their inadequacy in addressing the complexities of non-Western contexts (Ciófaló, 2021). In other words, the applicability of mainstream concepts may become geographically constrained, limiting their explanatory power to regions such as

Western Europe and the United States. As a decolonial endeavor, de-Westernization promotes alternative epistemologies grounded in lived experience, local realities, and postcolonial critique, thereby contesting the universalizing claims of Western frameworks (Alahmed, 2020). It serves as a normative corrective, advocating for “epistemic disobedience” and the integration of indigenous, subaltern, and decolonial perspectives into mainstream scholarship (Ciófaló, 2021; Guimarães Corrêa, 2023). In sum, calls for greater diversity in scholarship rest on the premise that topics overlooked by Western academics may hold substantial relevance in non-Western contexts (Mlotshwa, 2023; Waisbord & Mellado, 2014).

Although scholarly organizations, such as the International Communication Association (ICA), champion for greater integration across academic communities (Livingstone, 2007), some academics contend that the rhetoric of internationalization and globalization has yet to yield substantive changes in the circulation of knowledge from beyond the Western world (Albuquerque, 2021; Ekdale et al., 2022; Freelon et al., 2023). In communication and media studies, these disparities persist in complex and often subtle ways (Chan et al., 2021; Schatto-Eckrodt & Quandt, 2023). To illustrate, Albuquerque et al. (2020) found that nearly 90% of editorial board members in communication JCR journals were affiliated with institutions in Western Europe or the United States, while approximately 95% of communication journals indexed in Scopus were based in wealthy, industrialized nations (Demeter, 2020). In turn, Ekdale et al. (2022) contended that “Northern American and European scholars are particularly overrepresented in the highest-ranking journals in the field, while publications by scholars from the Global South are more likely to appear in lower-tier and regional journals” (p. 2519). Chakravartty et al. (2018) also highlight the overrepresentation of White scholars in communication studies, even when the topic under study is race. Moreover, these authors identify what they call “citational segregation (a preference for citing authors who are members of the same group), resulting from established patterns of racialized professional socialization” (Chakravartty et al., 2018, p. 260). That said, any fair discussion of these disparities must avoid a narrative of victimization and recognize that, while rooted in historical and structural inequalities, the Global North’s prominent academic position is also shaped by its greater economic capacity to fund research (Goyanes et al., 2022).

Truth be told, the de-Westernization debate has emerged as a distinct research niche (Waisbord, 2022), prompting reflection on whether discussions of disciplinary plurality have been predominantly shaped by North American and European perspectives, with limited visibility or engagement from Global South scholarly communities (Schatto-Eckrodt & Quandt, 2023). To encourage further scholarship on the topic, we also scrutinize the extent to which authors and institutions from the Global South have experienced a “controlled” presence in elite spaces through tokenistic strategies aimed at allegedly including scholars based in nonmainstream countries. According to Asuman et al. (2025), “Tokenism is a form of shallow, symbolic diversification in which a small number of individuals from underrepresented groups are presented as evidence of inclusivity without any deeper commitment to structural change” (p. 40).

Against this background, we examine the claim that researchers affiliated with institutions in Latin America, Southeast Asia, or Africa are not inherently excluded from publishing in high-impact journals—indeed, publication rates from these regions have increased significantly in recent decades (Ekdale et al., 2022; Freelon et al., 2023). The core question lies in the recurrent elevation of select voices—that is, those consistently invited, highlighted, or authorized to speak on behalf of the Global South. Asuman et al.’s

(2025) empirical analysis reveals that geographic representation on the editorial boards of leading communication journals remains limited and disproportionately concentrated within a few countries and institutions in underrepresented regions. For example, South Africa, Chile, and Brazil are dominant representatives of sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, respectively. Furthermore, individual scholars frequently occupy multiple editorial board positions, representing entire regions across several journals. Rather than reflecting genuine integration of diverse Global South perspectives, this pattern produces a form of "geographical diversity" marked by intellectual homogeneity.

More precisely, this article invites a critical examination of whether (and to what extent) the narratives of de-Westernization and the Global South have been domesticated. We employ the term domestication to interrogate subtle mechanisms that shape scholarly participation from the Global South, including: (1) pressures to conform to concepts, methods, and narrative structures rooted in Global North traditions; (2) expectations that article titles explicitly signal geographical scope or justify regional relevance through alignment with Western scholarly agendas; and (3) encouragement to collaborate with established scholars to navigate peer review processes more effectively. As used throughout this article, domestication also refers to the privileging of certain authors from the Global South (particularly those trained in institutions of the Global North) who tend to encounter fewer barriers to publication in high-impact journals.

While this article does not analyze the full content of articles addressing de-Westernization and Global South issues, it argues that assessing the intellectual trajectories of scholars who have successfully published in elite journals offers valuable insights into the influence of disciplinary norms and editorial conventions shaped by Western institutions and experts.

### **Methods**

The initial stage of our data collection consisted of retrieving metadata from journal articles. By applying the filtering tools available on the Scopus platform, we were able to isolate publications that included at least one of the following terms in their titles, abstracts, or keywords: "Global South," "de-Westernization," "Westernized," and "de-Westernized." The choice of titles, abstracts, or keywords was intended to prioritize documents that address academic inequities and the lack of diversity characterizing our field with greater centrality. These keywords reflect the core arguments and claims discussed in this study, helping us examine inequity-related issues in communication research. Besides, the four search terms were in English, as every communication journal indexed in the JCR publishes at least its articles' titles, abstracts, and keywords in this language (even if some outlets are based in non-English-speaking countries; Suzina, 2021).

This initial search retrieved 14,237 works. However, this number included articles from all research areas, not just communication and media, which explains why the total was high. To narrow the focus, we applied an extra step to remove articles that were not relevant to our study. We kept only those published in one of the 96 communication and media journals listed in Clarivate's JCR using the 2023 ranking edition, which was the most recent version available when we started the data collection process. While other platforms, such as Scopus, also rank journals, JCR uses the impact factor (IF) to measure the influence of a smaller group of highly cited journals. Although this limits selection, JCR has been used consistently in

decisions about academic promotions and research funding. Ultimately, our final list comprised 246 articles published between 1999 (the year the first article meeting our criteria was published) and 2023. This means our study spans a broad period, allowing us to observe long-term trends in the publication patterns of top-ranked journals in the field of communication. We then compiled a spreadsheet containing key information for each of the 246 articles, including title, authors, year of publication, journal, abstract, and keywords.

The second stage involved collecting prosopographic data on the authors of the articles identified above. According to Stone (1971), "prosopography is the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives" (p. 46). This approach has also been referred to as collective biography or multiple career-line analysis, as it involves gathering "relevant biographical ('external') data on a specific group of individuals to gain insight into the 'normal' or 'average' individual" (Fellman, 2014, p. 6). An example of this method applied to scientometric and bibliometric research is Benz and Larivière's (2025) study, which systematically gathered data from researchers' CVs and publications indexed in the Web of Science.

Namely, we focused on the institution where the authors of these 246 articles worked at the time of data collection and the university where they pursued (or were conducting) their doctoral training (35 authors were still pursuing their doctoral degree in December 2023). Four trained researchers collected prosopographic data, using various sources and tools to ensure accuracy. These included biographical details from recently published articles, information from personal and institutional websites outlining scholars' professional trajectories, and searches on platforms such as LinkedIn and ORCID. To maintain a high reliability standard, all biographical data were verified by cross-referencing at least two sources and confirmed by a minimum of two researchers. In total, 437 scholars contributed to the authorship of the 246 articles analyzed (we made no distinction about the order in which their names appeared in each article). To protect their privacy, all results were presented without identifying specific authors.

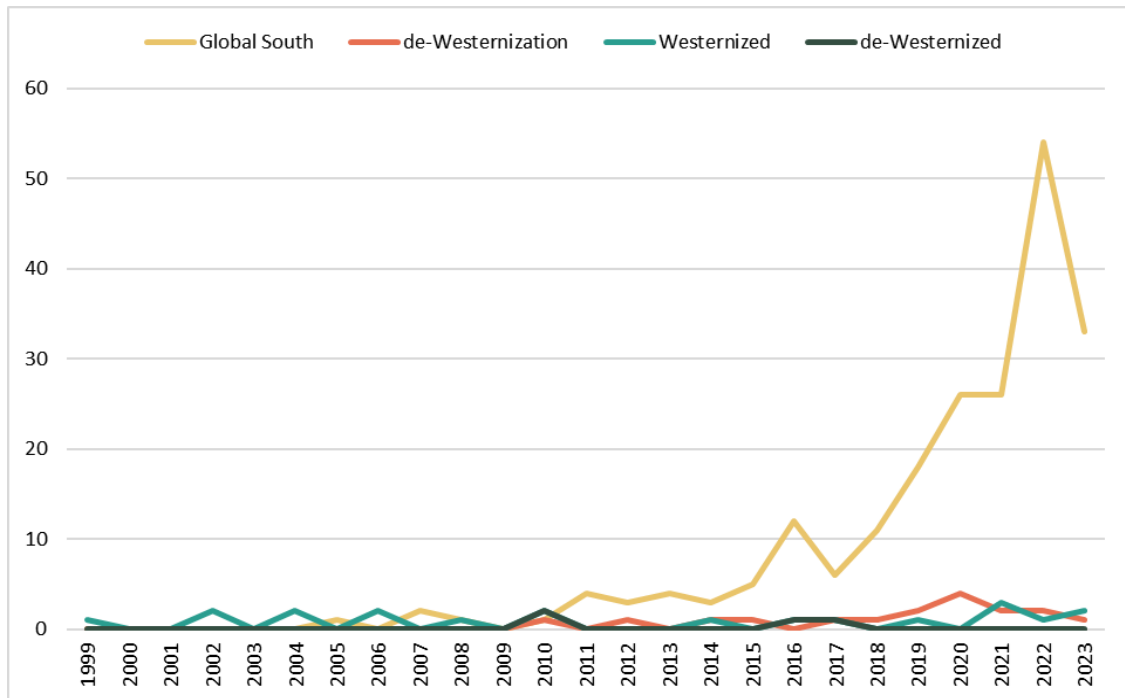
Our exploratory analysis used descriptive statistics. While this method has some limitations, we agree with Freelon et al. (2023) that "descriptive statistics provide indispensable tools for diagnosing inequities, and they should not be overshadowed by more sophisticated but less apposite inferential models" (p. 6). Additionally, we recognize that institutional affiliations alone do not fully capture individual experiences or career paths. Nevertheless, the data discussed here offer valuable insights for answering our research questions. To strengthen our analysis, we looked at the authors' current affiliations and the institutions where they earned their doctoral degrees.

## **Results**

### ***Top-Ranked Journals and the De-Westernization Agenda***

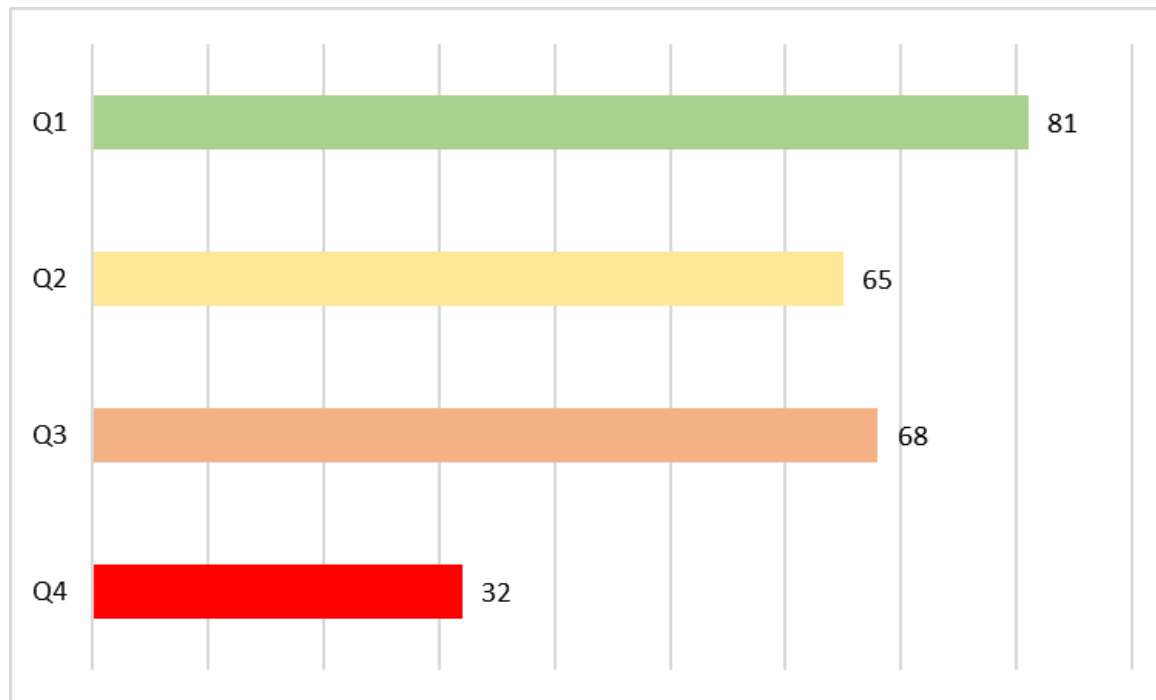
Figure 1 illustrates how often the 246 articles in the corpus mentioned at least one of the terms "Global South," "de-Westernization," "Westernized," and "de-Westernized" in their respective titles, abstracts, or keywords. The term "Global South" was found in 210 works, while "de-Westernization" appeared in 17 articles. "Westernized" was cited in 20 documents, while "de-Westernized" appeared in only four publications. Five articles mentioned more than one of the terms. In addition to the prominence of the

expression “Global South,” Figure 1 reveals that the number of articles addressing this subject has increased significantly over the last decade. While the earliest work in the corpus was published in 1999, more than 75% of the articles under investigation were published between 2018 and 2023.



**Figure 1. Number of articles published in JCR communication journals mentioning at least one of the keywords.**

Figure 2 presents the distribution of journal quartiles where these articles were accepted. Most articles were published in Q1 journals, indicating a strong presence in high-impact scholarly outlets: 81 articles (33% of the corpus). The number of documents in Q2 (65 articles, or 26% of the corpus) and Q3 outlets (68 articles, or 28% of the corpus) is similar. Q4 publications represent the smallest corpus share, comprising 32 articles (13%).



**Figure 2. JCR journals' quartiles in which the articles were published.**

These 246 articles were published in 56 different JCR communication journals. The outlets that published six or more articles are listed in Table 1 (see the complete data in Table 1A of the Online Appendix<sup>1</sup>). Among the journals that have most prominently featured research on de-Westernization are *Information, Communication and Society*, *Journalism Studies*, *International Journal of Communication*, *New Media and Society*, and *International Communication Gazette*. Notably, none of the journals listed in Table 1 is based in a Global South country.

<sup>1</sup> [https://1drv.ms/w/c/3df44ce93d70b5d3/EQ4uPYz7bXVCrsWV\\_o-MDBgBgnXO5IfTPHfYhQCmbkhEuw?e=2nsYre](https://1drv.ms/w/c/3df44ce93d70b5d3/EQ4uPYz7bXVCrsWV_o-MDBgBgnXO5IfTPHfYhQCmbkhEuw?e=2nsYre)

**Table 1. List of JCR Journals With the Most Published Articles.<sup>2</sup>**

Journal (Country)	Number of articles	Quartile
Information, Communication and Society (United Kingdom)	20	Q1
Journalism Studies (United Kingdom)	18	Q2
International Journal of Communication (United States)	15	Q3
New Media and Society (United Kingdom)	15	Q1
International Communication Gazette (United Kingdom)	14	Q3
Communication Theory (United States)	10	Q2
Environmental Communication (United Kingdom)	10	Q2
Journalism (United Kingdom)	10	Q2
Journalism Practice (United Kingdom)	9	Q3
African Journalism Studies (United Kingdom)	7	Q4
Digital Journalism (United Kingdom)	7	Q1
Mobile Media and Communication (United States)	7	Q1
Television and New Media (United States)	7	Q3
Communication, Culture and Critique (United States)	6	Q3
Social Media and Society (United Kingdom)	6	Q1

#### **Authors' Academic Profiles**

From this point forward, the article adopts the 437 scholars who authored the 246 articles in the research corpus as its unit of analysis. Table 2 presents the countries where 373 of these scholars earned their doctoral degrees. It is worth noting that 20 authors did not hold a doctoral degree at the time of data collection. Information about the academic background of 44 others could not be identified in any of the databases mentioned above.<sup>3</sup> Table 2 also divides countries into the Global North (highlighted in blue) and the Global South (highlighted in salmon)—once again, following Demeter's (2020) classification.

<sup>2</sup> The use of colors in Table 1 refers to the quartiles of the journals: Q1 (green), Q2 (yellow), Q3 (orange), and Q4 (red).

<sup>3</sup> Of the 373 authors whose academic trajectories were mapped, 35 were Ph.D. candidates at the time of data collection. Additionally, four researchers pursued their doctoral studies across two institutions: two were trained at the School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (France) and Concordia University (Canada), one at the University of Malawi (Malawi) and the University of the West of England (United Kingdom) and the remaining one at the University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa) and the University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom). Furthermore, the same researcher obtained a doctorate from two different institutions: one from Maharaja Sayajirao University (India) and the other from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (United States).

**Table 2. Countries Where the Authors Completed Their Doctoral Training.**

Country	Number of authors (%)
United States	142 (38%)
United Kingdom	44 (11.7%)
Germany	24 (6.4%)
Australia	20 (5.4%)
Brazil	20 (5.4%)
South Africa	14 (3.8%)
Spain	11 (2.9%)
India	7 (1.9%)
Singapore	7 (1.9%)
Canada	6 (1.6%)
Italy	6 (1.6%)
Netherlands	6 (1.6%)
Belgium	5 (1.3%)
Hong Kong	5 (1.3%)
New Zealand	5 (1.3%)
Switzerland	5 (1.3%)
Sweden	4 (1.1%)
China	3 (0.8%)
Denmark	3 (0.8%)
Ireland	3 (0.8%)
Japan	3 (0.8%)
Norway	3 (0.8%)
Austria	2 (0.5%)
France	2 (0.5%)
Israel	2 (0.5%)
Nigeria	2 (0.5%)
Argentina	1 (0.3%)
Chile	1 (0.3%)
Colombia	1 (0.3%)
Cyprus	1 (0.3%)
Czech Republic	1 (0.3%)
Finland	1 (0.3%)
Ghana	1 (0.3%)
Hungary	1 (0.3%)
Indonesia	1 (0.3%)
Mexico	1 (0.3%)

Morocco	1 (0.3%)
Peru	1 (0.3%)
Portugal	1 (0.3%)
United Arab Emirates	1 (0.3%)
More than one country	5 (1.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>373 (100%)</b>

Most scholars completed their doctoral training in the United States, which hosted 142 authors (38%), and the United Kingdom, where 44 scholars (11.7% of the total number of authors) were based. Countries where more than 10 researchers earned their doctoral degrees include Germany, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, and Spain—highlighting the limited representation of Global South nations as training hubs for scholars publishing in JCR-listed journals.

Table 3 lists the institutions where six or more scholars completed their doctoral training (information on all universities is available in Table 2A of the Online Appendix<sup>4</sup>). Twenty-four universities played a pivotal role in doctoral training, with 14 located in the United States. Notably, only three institutions from the Global South—two in Brazil and one in South Africa—were represented, highlighting their marginal presence among the foremost centers of advanced academic preparation.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://1drv.ms/w/c/3df44ce93d70b5d3/EQ4uPYz7bXVCrsWV\\_o-MDBgBgnXO5IfTPHfYhQCmbkhEuw?e=2nsYre](https://1drv.ms/w/c/3df44ce93d70b5d3/EQ4uPYz7bXVCrsWV_o-MDBgBgnXO5IfTPHfYhQCmbkhEuw?e=2nsYre).

**Table 3. Institutions at Which the Authors Obtained Their Doctoral Degrees (Awarding Universities With Four or More Researchers).**

University	Number of authors (N)
University of London <sup>5</sup> (United Kingdom)	12
University of California (United States)	9
University of Wisconsin-Madison (United States)	8
North Carolina State University (United States)	7
Indiana University (United States)	6
University of Minnesota (United States)	6
University of Pennsylvania (United States)	6
University of Melbourne (Australia)	6
Stellenbosch University (South Africa)	6
Northwestern University (United States)	5
Ohio University (United States)	5
Purdue University (United States)	5
University of Iowa (United States)	5
University of Oregon (United States)	5
University of Texas at Austin (United States)	5
Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)	5
Michigan State University (United States)	4
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (United States)	4
University of Cambridge (United Kingdom)	4
Free University of Berlin (Germany)	4
University of Queensland (Australia)	4
Federal University of Parana (Brazil)	4
Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	4
National University of Singapore (Singapore)	4

**Scholars' Institutional Affiliation**

Table 4 shows the countries where the authors analyzed in this study were employed during the first half of 2024. Following Demeter's (2020) classification, countries from the Global North are marked in blue, and those from the Global South are marked in salmon. Information was available for 414 of the 437 authors; 20 had no professional details listed, and three described themselves as "autonomous," meaning they were not affiliated with a university. The United States and the United Kingdom were again the most common locations. Of the 414 authors, 111 (27%) were affiliated with institutions in the United States, while 45 (11%) worked in the United Kingdom. Among Global South countries, Brazil had the highest

<sup>5</sup> Includes the London School of Economics and Political Science (four authors), UCL (three authors), SOAS (two authors), Goldsmiths (two authors) and Queen Mary University of London (one author). We decided to group these institutions together because the University of London website emphasizes that they work in collaboration: <https://www.london.ac.uk/>.

representation with 20 authors (5%), followed by South Africa with 15 (3.7%), India with 12 (2.9%), and Chile with 11 (2.7%).

**Table 4. Countries Where the Authors' Current Institutions Are Located.**

Country	Number of authors (%)
United States	111 (27%)
United Kingdom	45 (11%)
Germany	26 (6.5%)
Brazil	20 (5%)
Australia	16 (4%)
South Africa	15 (3.7%)
India	12 (2.9%)
Netherlands	12 (2.9%)
Chile	11 (2.7%)
China	9 (2.2%)
Singapore	9 (2.2%)
Belgium	8 (1.9%)
Spain	7 (1.7%)
Colombia	6 (1.4%)
Hong Kong	6 (1.4%)
Canada	5 (1.2%)
Ireland	5 (1.2%)
New Zealand	5 (1.2%)
Qatar	5 (1.2%)
Sweden	5 (1.2%)
Switzerland	5 (1.2%)
Indonesia	4 (1%)
Italy	4 (1%)
Japan	4 (1%)
Malaysia	3 (0.7%)
Mexico	3 (0.7%)
Nigeria	3 (0.7%)
Norway	3 (0.7%)
Philippines	3 (0.7%)
Uganda	3 (0.7%)
Argentina	2 (0.5%)
Austria	2 (0.5%)
Ghana	2 (0.5%)

Israel	2 (0.5%)
Kenya	2 (0.5%)
Morocco	2 (0.5%)
Taiwan	2 (0.5%)
United Arab Emirates	2 (0.5%)
Vietnam	2 (0.5%)
Bolivia	1 (0.2%)
Costa Rica	1 (0.2%)
Denmark	1 (0.2%)
Ecuador	1 (0.2%)
France	1 (0.2%)
Hungary	1 (0.2%)
Iran	1 (0.2%)
Iraq	1 (0.2%)
Lebanon	1 (0.2%)
Liberia	1 (0.2%)
Malawi	1 (0.2%)
Namibia	1 (0.2%)
Pakistan	1 (0.2%)
Peru	1 (0.2%)
Portugal	1 (0.2%)
Puerto Rico	1 (0.2%)
Russia	1 (0.2%)
South Korea	1 (0.2%)
Tanzania	1 (0.2%)
Trinidad and Tobago	1 (0.2%)
Turkey	1 (0.2%)
Zimbabwe	1 (0.2%)
More than one country	1 (0.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>414 (100%)</b>

Table 5 displays the universities that stand out in terms of authors' employment status (the data for all institutions are available in Table 3A of the Online Appendix<sup>6</sup>). The University of London, previously noted as a key site of doctoral training for the authors in this study, also has a leading role as the current employer of 11 researchers. Among other institutions employing at least four authors, one is based in the United Kingdom, four are located in the United States, two are in Australia, and one is in Germany. The

<sup>6</sup> [https://1drv.ms/w/c/3df44ce93d70b5d3/EQ4uPYz7bXVCrsWV\\_o-MDBgBgnXO5IfTPHFyhQCmbkhEuw?e=2nsYre](https://1drv.ms/w/c/3df44ce93d70b5d3/EQ4uPYz7bXVCrsWV_o-MDBgBgnXO5IfTPHFyhQCmbkhEuw?e=2nsYre)

single university from the Global South is Northwestern University in Qatar; however, its affiliation with a U.S.-based educational organization should be considered.

**Table 5. Authors' Institutional Affiliation (Universities Employing Four or More Researchers).**

University	Number of authors (N)
University of London <sup>7</sup> (United Kingdom)	11
University of Iowa (United States)	7
Loughborough University (United Kingdom)	7
New York University (United States)	6
University of Hamburg <sup>8</sup> (Germany)	6
University of Maryland (United States)	5
University of Amsterdam (Netherlands)	5
Dublin City University (Ireland)	5
Massey University (New Zealand)	5
North Carolina State University (United States)	4
RMIT University (Australia)	4
University of Melbourne (Australia)	4
National University of Singapore (Singapore)	4
Northwestern University in Qatar (Qatar)	4
University of Zurich (Switzerland)	4

#### ***Differences in Global South and Global North Authorship***

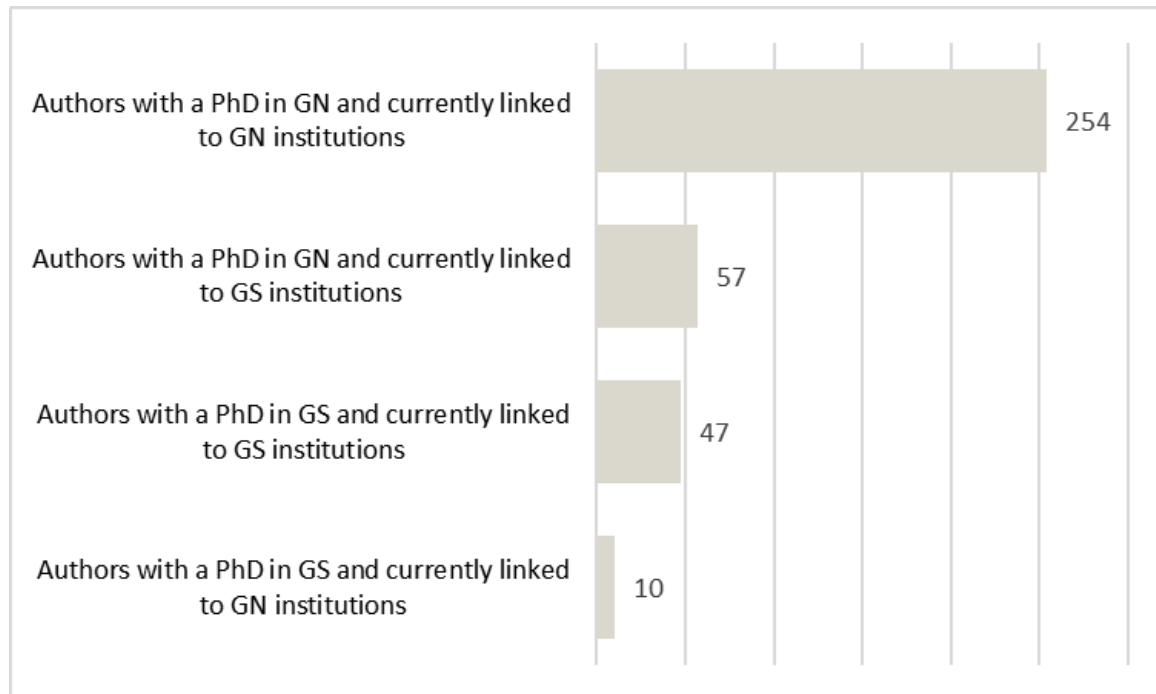
This study presents the results of the relationship between (a) the region where the authors earned their doctoral degrees and (b) the region of their current institutional affiliations. To examine this association, we established four categories: (1) scholars who earned their doctoral degrees from institutions in the Global North and are currently employed by universities also located in the Global North; (2) scholars who obtained their doctorates from Global North institutions, but are affiliated with universities in the Global South; (3) scholars who completed their Ph.D. training in the Global South and currently work at institutions within the same region; and (4) scholars who received their doctoral education in the Global South, but are employed by institutions in the Global North. We excluded 69 authors from Table 3 because we could not confirm either their current institutional affiliation or the university where they earned their doctoral degree.

Figure 3 shows that most authors engaging with topics such as "de-Westernization" and the Global South hold doctoral degrees and currently work at institutions in the Global North (254 cases, 69% of the 368 authors listed). Fifty-seven researchers completed their doctorates in the Global North, but currently work in the Global South (15.5%), while another 47 (13%) hold a doctorate and are affiliated with organizations in the Global South. Only 10 researchers (2.5% of the 368 cases) earned their doctoral degrees at universities in the Global South and subsequently moved to institutions in the Global North. In

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>8</sup> Includes Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research, which is affiliated with the University of Hamburg: <https://leibniz-hbi.de/en/institute/>

sum, the data indicate that scholars who succeed in publishing in top-ranked journals on academic inequities are predominantly trained and employed by institutions based in the Global North.



**Figure 3. Authors' ties with the Global North and Global South.**

Table 6 provides a more detailed breakdown of the data presented in Figure 3 by examining the number of published articles across the four previously defined author categories. The results emphasize the dominance of scholars who earned their doctoral degrees in the Global North and are currently affiliated with institutions in the same region. Only 10 authors published three or more articles, eight of whom were both trained and employed in the Global North. None of the scholars who completed their doctorates and currently work in the Global South reached this level of publication output.

**Table 6. Authors' Institutional Affiliations in the Global North (GN) and Global South (GS) and Their Corresponding Publication Output.<sup>9</sup>**

	Number of scholars authoring one article (%)	Number of scholars authoring two articles (%)	Number of scholars authoring three or more articles (%)
<b>PhD in GN, employed in GN</b>	221 (68.5%)	25 (67.5%)	8 (80%)
<b>PhD in GN, employed in GS</b>	50 (15.5%)	6 (16.5%)	1 (10%)
<b>PhD in GS, employed in GS</b>	43 (13.5%)	4 (10.5%)	0
<b>PhD in GS, employed in GS</b>	7 (2.5%)	2 (5.5%)	1 (10%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>321 (100%)</b>	<b>37 (100%)</b>	<b>10 (100%)</b>

Table 7 builds on the previously established categorization of authors by doctoral training and current institutional affiliation to examine the quartile rankings of the journals where their articles were published. The total percentage may exceed 100%, as some authors have contributed to multiple articles published across different tiers of the JCR scale.

Once again, researchers who have earned their doctoral degrees and are currently employed in the Global North tend to publish more in higher-ranked journals. Among the 254 authors trained and working in the Global North, 99 (or 39%) published in Q1 journals, and 86 (or 34%) published in Q2 journals. Of the 57 authors with a doctorate in the Global North and currently employed in the Global South, the results are similar: 25 (or 44%) published in Q1 and 18 (or 31.5%) published in Q2. In contrast, authors whose academic careers—both doctoral training and current employment—are entirely based in the Global South tend to publish more frequently in Q3 journals. This pattern suggests that scholars in non-Global North countries not only contribute less to the study of de-Westernization and Global South-related issues but also face challenges in accessing higher-ranked publication venues.

**Table 7. Authors' Institutional Affiliations in the Global North (GN) and Global South (GS) and Their Respective Publication Performance Based on Journal Rankings.<sup>10</sup>**

	PhD in GN, employed in GN N (% de 254)	PhD in GN, employed in GS N (% de 57)	PhD in GS, employed in GS N (% de 47)	PhD in GS, employed in GN N (% de 10)
<b>Q1 Publications</b>	99 (39%)	25 (44%)	12 (25.5%)	6 (60%)
<b>Q2 Publications</b>	86 (34%)	18 (31.5%)	12 (25.5%)	2 (20%)
<b>Q3 Publications</b>	70 (27.5%)	17 (30%)	16 (34%)	3 (30%)
<b>Q4 Publications</b>	20 (8%)	1 (2%)	9 (19%)	1 (10%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>10</b>

<sup>9</sup> The 69 missing cases in "institution where the author completed their Ph.D. programs" or in "authors' current institutions" were also excluded from Tables 6 and 7.

<sup>10</sup> See footnote 7.

Lastly, when we analyzed the data, we found that, of the 47 researchers who earned their PhDs and currently work in institutions in the Global South, 24—just over half—co-authored the articles in our study with researchers connected to the Global North, either through their education or current job.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

This study investigated communication and media journals that have published papers addressing “de-Westernization” and “Global South”-related issues. It further examined the intellectual trajectories of scholars who have discussed academic inequities within leading, high-impact publication venues.

Our findings indicate that the topic has gained increasing prominence in prestigious communication and media journals in recent years, with more than 75% of the 246 articles in our sample published between 2018 and 2023. However, an analysis of the authors’ profiles (specifically, the institutions where such scholars received their doctoral training and their current affiliations) reveals the continued hegemony of the United States and Western Europe as dominant centers of knowledge production. Brazil emerges as the leading country in the Global South in terms of doctoral training within our sample, having awarded 20 PhD holders, which represents 5.4% of the 373 authors listed in Table 2. Nonetheless, a single institution in the Global North (the University of London) employs and has conferred more doctoral degrees than several highly populated Global South nations, including China, Nigeria, Argentina, and Mexico. This disparity underscores the enduring dominance of researchers trained in and affiliated with institutions in the Global North, particularly in elite journals that critically engage with the de-Westernization of our field scholarship.

Several factors may account for these results. First, the notable presence of scholars trained in or affiliated with institutions in the United States may reflect a sustained interest within that academic community in studies related to de-Westernization and the Global South, potentially resulting in higher submission and publication rates. Put differently, the structural imbalances in global academic publishing not only lead to the disproportionate presence and visibility of scholars trained in and affiliated with institutions in North America and Western Europe but also influence how issues of inequality are framed and theorized, often reflecting certain epistemic perspectives in elite academic circles. Besides, structural barriers identified in the literature also warrant consideration. These include the requirement for fluency in English (Suzina, 2021) and the expectation to “contextualize” non-Western cases using narratives, theories, methodologies, and references that align with the epistemological frameworks favored by editors and reviewers based in the Global North (Chan et al., 2021; Chakravartty et al., 2018). Put simply, topics primarily affecting scholars from the Global South have mainly been explored by researchers trained and currently working in the Global North.

This highlights the need to better understand broader trends in how academic knowledge is produced globally. For example, many of the most well-known historians of the Spanish Civil War, such as Paul Preston (2006), are based in institutions like Oxford and Cambridge. Although Preston has conducted extensive research in Spain, his academic career has primarily developed in the United Kingdom. This is not necessarily a problem, but it highlights how access to data, advanced training, and academic networks often

depends on the financial resources and infrastructure available at well-funded universities, which are usually located in wealthier countries.

The results also prompt critical inquiry into whether a subtle form of “domestication” is occurring within the field. While the term itself remains contested, it underscores the underlying tensions between divergent paradigms of scientific practice and efforts to assert a singular, “correct” way of doing science. For instance, when scholars based in the Global South are expected to adhere to research standards predominantly shaped by their counterparts in the Global North, even in areas such as the de-Westernization of communication and media studies, a disconnect arises that warrants critical reflection. Therefore, academic associations should allocate greater attention to this issue in future conferences.

Second, it is true that some authors based in the Global South have managed to overcome certain barriers in mainstream academic publishing, even without having studied abroad or being affiliated with institutions in wealthier countries. They have gradually become familiar with the dominant styles, methods, and theoretical frameworks commonly used in communication and media studies, enabling them to engage with more competitive scholarly platforms. While publishing in high-impact international journals is commendable, we must critically examine whether adapting to global academic standards may sometimes conflict with the intellectual traditions and research policies typical of specific regions. In the Brazilian context, for instance, graduate programs are assessed by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) according to a national journal ranking system. More precisely, every four years, the Ministry of Education convenes panels of national experts to evaluate and rank academic journals across various fields of knowledge (CAPES, 2019). If these experts determine that inclusion in international databases is not a decisive criterion, they may tailor evaluation parameters that recognize local journals as equivalent to top-tier international publications. Truth be told, in such cases, the national system may reveal its resistance to aligning with global standards in academic evaluation, thereby creating a protective framework that insulates local scholarship from allegedly more rigorous external criteria. Nevertheless, critiques of alignment with the implicit expectations of high-impact journals, particularly about the framing and structuring of scholarly arguments, remain pertinent. These expectations can reflect a subtler form of academic subjugation, often manifesting in the portrayal of case studies from the Global South as “exotic” or “adventurous” (Clark, 2020; Ng et al., 2020).

At this point, it is essential to clarify that this analysis does not aim to critique Global South scholars who have successfully published in leading international journals. Instead, the concern centers on the broader publishing ecosystem, specifically how editorial practices and decision-making processes may, whether deliberately or inadvertently, privilege contributors with academic training or professional affiliations rooted in institutions located in the Global North.

In this vein, the data and reflections presented here support the identification of four distinct pathways through which scholars may obtain the necessary credentials to participate in high-prestige academic circuits: (1) through the institution where they received their doctoral training, (2) through their current professional affiliation, (3) through co-authorship with internationally recognized scholars or research groups, and (4) through the acquisition of skills that enable them to navigate the norms and conventions established by dominant academic communities. This last pathway often involves

engagement with scholars from the Global North at conferences, workshops, or within professional associations. Needless to say, these four components may operate simultaneously with varying degrees of intensity and interaction.

In addition, multiple factors contribute to the underrepresentation of scholars from the Global South in high-impact journals, many of which are difficult to quantify. Among these are individual career paths and national academic systems that may not prioritize or incentivize publication in international outlets. While the academic debate outlined here rightly emphasizes external barriers imposed by dominant academic structures in the Global North, other internal factors may also impede academic prominence in certain Global South contexts. For example, countries such as the United States and Germany rely on sustained investments in scientific and research infrastructure (Hedding & Breetzke, 2021). Additional endogenous challenges include insufficient or inconsistent public investment in research, limited institutional support for academic activities, bureaucratic impediments, and the marginalization of science and education within national policy agendas (Carvalho et al., 2023; Ramírez-Castañeda, 2020; Vessuri et al., 2014). A more nuanced analysis should account for systemic inequities and the varying levels of national commitment to academic development.

Our results are not without limitations. Although we conducted a comprehensive search using multiple terms related to de-Westernization and Global South issues in articles published in reputable JCR-indexed journals, future investigations should consider expanding the range of keywords to capture a broader spectrum of relevant scholarship. It is also true that many scholars based and trained in countries such as Ghana, Colombia, or Bangladesh do not necessarily center their research on the concepts of “de-Westernization” or the “Global South.” These researchers may effectively challenge hegemonic theories without explicitly employing such terms. Nevertheless, our findings offer empirical insights into how this terminology has recurrently been adopted within the hegemonic circuits of the field. Additionally, it is essential to recognize that scholars based in various regions frequently publish in national and international journals that are not indexed in databases such as Web of Science or Scopus. These local academic circuits represent important sites of scholarly excellence and should be recognized in the global landscape of knowledge production (Vessuri et al., 2014). In addition, editorial preferences for particular research agendas in top-ranked journals may also influence publication outcomes, though other factors (such as professional and personal networks) should not be overlooked. Finally, we may not fully capture the contextual factors shaping researchers’ educational backgrounds, institutional affiliations, and publishing behaviors. Socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions across regions and academic systems can significantly affect scholars’ access to resources and motivation to engage with topics about de-Westernization and the Global South. Despite these complexities, we provide several building blocks for future theory building, underscoring the need for collective efforts to foster greater inclusivity and epistemic diversity in scholarly publishing.

In conclusion, there is a pressing need for greater scholarly attention to the systemic conditions that shape the acquisition of academic capital, particularly through publication in prestigious journals. A critical step toward addressing this imbalance is advocating for increased geographical and institutional diversity within editorial boards—making the plurality of journal boards a criterion in ranking evaluations.

Without such efforts, calls for de-Westernization will remain predominantly shaped by the perspectives of academics affiliated with institutions in the United States and Western Europe.

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