

# Segmented Communities in the Global South: Where Do IR Argentine Scholars Publish and Why?

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## ABSTRACT


Claims about international relations and political science more broadly becoming more globalized coexist with enduring critiques of the discipline being dominated by scholars from wealthier Western countries. This article leverages data on publication patterns between 2008 and 2020 in the Argentine IR community, which we believe is a relevant and potentially representative sample from the Global South, to show that the discipline is becoming more globalized yet also more segmented. We argue that this segmentation is a product of unequal participation in social and professional networks. The norms and information that circulate through these networks shape the inclination as well as the ability of Global South scholars to join a globalizing discipline.


A recent survey of political scientists in 102 countries suggested that the discipline of political science, which includes international relations (IR), has globalized, meaning that what scholars study (i.e., topics and theories) and how they study it (i.e., methods) are increasingly similar across countries (Norris 2020). The opposite view also is present in the literature. Those scholars who are critical of the idea of a global discipline emphasize that authors from the periphery remain marginalized, for the most part, due to the lack of resources and gatekeeping practices (Tickner 2013; Turton and Freire 2016). In this article, we show that both views could be capturing real dynamics. Claims of greater global similarity reflect the views and work of a subset of scholars from the Global South who participate in transnational networks with hubs in the developed Global North. The reality, however, is that in Global South countries, these embedded scholars are only a subset of those who teach at universities and conduct academic research. Thus, rather than arguing that Global South scholars either are included or marginalized in this global conversation, we examined how both tendencies coexist within the same scientific community.

We observed this segmentation in the publication patterns of Argentine IR scholars. Argentina is a good case for exploring the coexistence of these trends because as a middle-income country with the 21st highest percentage of population with tertiary education, the local scientific community should be large enough to present variation in publication patterns.<sup>12</sup> We expected Argentina to be representative of other Global South countries with identifiable scholarly communities that still remain peripheral to the main centers of scientific production. We focused on the IR subfield because, similar to comparative politics, we expected IR to include greater geographical diversity in the most-visible journals relative to other subfields.<sup>3</sup>

We assumed that scholars representing “global IR” trends tend to publish in more-visible journals, perceived as having greater academic prestige—per indexation criteria—and, among those, in journals based in Global North countries. We refer to these as “global journals.” Conversely, we assumed that those who do not participate in the global IR discipline tend to do the opposite. They publish in less globally visible journals with greater regional or local readership. We expected Argentine scholars to be more likely to publish in global journals when they are part of social and professional networks that value international publications and provide information about how to achieve them. To measure participation in these networks, we considered whether authors pursued graduate studies in the Global North, whether they coauthored with scholars based in Global North universities, and the publication records of their departmental colleagues.

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We tested our argument through regression analysis against a novel dataset of 721 IR articles published by Argentina-based scholars between 2008 and 2020 (Montal, Pauselli, and Yamin 2022). Unlike most available studies on publications data, we went beyond Scopus-indexed journals to include regional journals indexed in less widely accessed databases. Similar to surveys that

foster publication in global journals through the coauthor's own professional incentives. Universities in the Global North, in general, are more explicit than in the Global South about which publication outlets are needed for promotion. Therefore, a Global North coauthor might be less interested in publishing in less-visible regional venues. Thus, our second hypothesis is that:

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only reach scholars who are part of global networks, we believe that considering publications solely from Scopus journals paints an incomplete picture of what Global South scholars produce. Our analysis found that education in the Global North, coauthoring with a colleague based in the Global North, and the previous publication patterns of colleagues in the same department are related to a higher likelihood of publication in global journals.

#### WHAT EXPLAINS SEGMENTATION IN PUBLICATION PATTERNS?

Publications are largely a product of choices and resources. Authors choose where to submit manuscripts partly based on professional conventions about which journals are appropriate placements for their research. Authors also might consider their chances of success when choosing where to submit; however, the level of uncertainty of the publication process makes it difficult to do so with confidence, especially in more competitive journals. By “resources,” we are referring to information that is valuable for successfully navigating the publication process at the journal of choice—for example, how to structure the manuscript or highlight a contribution. Those who share these conventions and have acquired these skills and information tend to publish in similar journals.

First, scholars are exposed to norms and information through their graduate training. Thus, we expected the likelihood of publishing in internationally visible journals to be related to

*Hypothesis 2:* Articles for which at least one coauthor is based in the Global North are more likely to be published in global journals.

Third, we considered whether norms and information also are shared within university departments. Shared norms can generate convergence through emulation if individuals expect reputational costs for not publishing similarly to colleagues in the same department. Convergence also could be a product of information sharing about an inherently uncertain process, such as publishing a paper. Scholars should be receptive to information that would allow them to shorten the process. A colleague's positive experience with a journal provides information that the possibility of publishing in that journal is relatively good. Similarly, a colleague's rejection in another journal might discourage a scholar from submitting a paper for publication there. We do not argue that only one of these two mechanisms—emulation or information sharing—explains the relationship between individuals' publication records and their departmental colleagues' records. Rather, we view them as complementary and pointing to the same expectation—that is, convergence within a department regarding publication outcomes. Thus, our third hypothesis is that:

*Hypothesis 3:* Scholars will be more likely to publish in global journals when others in their department have done so in the recent past.

*Shared norms can generate convergence through emulation if individuals expect reputational costs for not publishing similarly to colleagues in the same department.*

where authors obtained their graduate degree. The idea that higher-impact journals are the expected placements for one's research is practically unquestioned in Global North universities, but it is not a generally accepted norm in the Global South. Thus, our first hypothesis is that:

*Hypothesis 1:* The proportion of authors with a doctoral degree from a university in the Global North is positively related to the likelihood of an article being published in a global journal.

Second, norms and information travel through professional networks. Research on coauthorship patterns in major political science journals revealed the existence of a large network of authors located worldwide (Metz and Jäckle 2017). Whereas ties to Global North scholars can disseminate norms and resources beyond those who attended graduate school abroad, they also can

#### ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

There recently has been an increased interest in gender differences in political science. Some of the findings from this research are that prominent journals publish fewer articles by women than by men (Teele and Thelen 2017) and that men submit more articles than women (Brown and Samuels 2018; Djupe, Smith, and Sokhey 2019). These findings lead us to expect similar dynamics in the Argentine scientific community resulting in women authors being less likely to publish in global journals.

A second possibility is that attributes of the articles, and not the authors, explain where they are published. For several reasons (e.g., language, distance, and resources), Argentine scholars might be in a better position to access higher-quality evidence on their own country and the Latin American region than elsewhere and, as a result, be expected by outsiders to speak about their own

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region with more authority than about other parts of the world. Even the belief that this expectation exists could result in authors self-selecting into certain journals based on the subject matter, expecting more favorable results in global journals with work on their country or region.

A third possibility is that, given the greater prominence of quantitative methods in higher-visibility journals (Mahoney 2007), scholars will be more likely to publish in global journals when they use quantitative methods. We recognize that IR has a long tradition of qualitative research, but we focused on publishing patterns in the past decade. This coincides with a trend in the field that gives increasing importance to quantitative research.

A fourth factor that influences placement may be the literature with which an article is in conversation. Reviewers may react more positively to manuscripts that reference literature they recognize. Reviewers in global journals are more likely to be Global North-based scholars, who usually are less familiar with academic work from the Global South than regional academics who generally review manuscripts in regional and domestic journals. Conversely, reviewers from regional journals might suggest referencing other Global South-based work. Because we observed only published versions, we cannot know whether authors preemptively adapt their reference list to what they expect reviewers will like, or whether reviewers require the inclusion of more Global North or Global South references, or both.

Fifth, material incentives in the form of promotion requirements—which are fairly common in the Global North—also may explain publication patterns of Global South scholars. If this were the case, then it would be difficult to disentangle material incentives from the previous argument based on the dissemination of convention and information. However, as mentioned previously, whereas explicit publication standards for promotion are rare in Argentine universities, they do exist for scholars affiliated with the Argentine Research Council, commonly known as CONICET and akin to the American National Science Foundation. CONICET researchers are ascribed to universities and receive monetary compensation that supplements their university salary with the expectation that they will devote their time to research. CONICET has more formalized standards for evaluating its researchers' publications—international journals have greater value—and uses them as metrics for promotion. These are extremely sensitive processes because negative reviews can result in researchers losing their appointments or being delayed in a particular category, thereby missing out on salary increases. Therefore, we expect articles authored by CONICET researchers to be more likely to appear in global journals. More important, because scholars with CONICET-appointment work in a university department but not all faculty in that department will have a similar appointment, we can observe which affiliation—and, therefore, which mechanism—has more explanatory power.

## DATA AND METHODS

To test these expectations, we collected data on publications by IR scholars based in Argentina from 2008 to 2020. “Argentine scholars” refers to individuals based in and publishing from Argentina, independent of their nationality. Our dependent variable consisted of two indicators for global and nonglobal

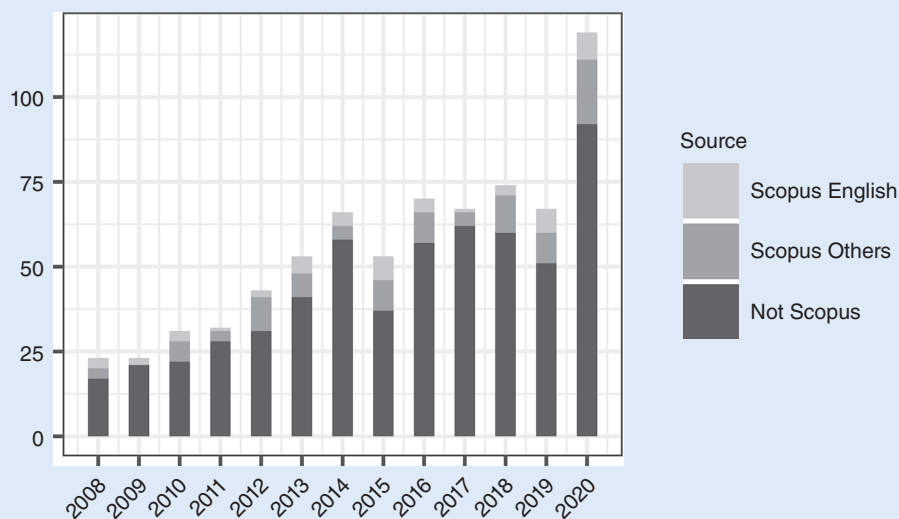
journals. The first was whether journals were included in the Scopus database. Journals are entered in Scopus when they reach certain levels for their H-index, SCImago Journal Rank, and other metrics. We believe that this is a good indicator of whether journals represent the global discipline of IR because they are more visible and widely read. Among those, journals that are published mainly in English are even more likely to be read widely and globally. Thus, our second indicator identified Scopus-indexed journals that publish mainly in English. To confirm the validity of this indicator, we consulted the most recent Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) survey of faculty in 30 countries that asks which IR journals publish articles with the greatest influence. All identified journals are indexed in Scopus<sup>45</sup> (Maliniak et al. 2017). (See table 1 in the online appendix for the complete list.)

Data on articles published by Argentine scholars in journals indexed by Scopus are from the Scopus website. The data on non-Scopus publications were collected manually. We began by collecting articles in journals indexed in the regional database SciELO, a bibliographic database of open-access journals created to serve scientific communities of Latin American countries as well as Portugal and Spain. We supplemented those with other regional and local journals that are not indexed in these databases but that qualitative evidence and informal interviews suggested are common journals in which IR Argentine scholars publish. The result is a dataset of 791 articles. Figure 1 shows the distribution of our dependent variable over time. The local IR community has become more productive but most of this output generally appears in nonglobal journals.

To test our first hypothesis, we calculated for each article the ratio of authors who obtained their PhD from a university in the Global North. However, those who perform an academic role in Argentina—teaching at the university level, researching, and publishing—do not necessarily pursue a doctoral degree, which results in a significant proportion of articles in our dataset not being authored by PhDs. Thus, to distinguish the impact of a doctoral degree from the impact of connections to the Global North, we included a second variable: the ratio of authors in an article who obtained their PhD from a university in the Global South. For our second hypothesis, we created a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if an article has any coauthors based in the Global North. For our third hypothesis about emulation and information sharing within departments, we identified each author's departmental affiliation and then calculated the share of papers that were published in global journals in the previous three years by all other scholars in the same department.<sup>6</sup>

To control for alternative explanations, we calculated the ratio of authors who are women. To determine whether Argentine scholars are more likely to publish on certain topics using certain methods in either type of journal, we classified all articles into five topics: Democracy and Human Rights, Foreign Policy Analysis, International Political Economy (IPE), International Security, and Theory. (See figure 1 in the online appendix for the distribution of articles by topic.) We coded whether each article focuses on Latin America, which means that the article analyzed the region as a whole or a specific country and whether it used quantitative methods. To control for whether the referenced literature tends to vary with the type of journal, we identified all references cited in

Figure 1  
Articles by Type of Journal



at least three of the 721 papers in our dataset. We then coded whether each uniquely referenced author was based in the Global South or Global North and calculated the ratio of referenced authors from the Global North. Finally, to control the potential effect of material incentives through promotion requirements, we calculated the ratio of authors with a CONICET appointment. (See table 2 in the online appendix for descriptive statistics of all independent variables.)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We ran a set of logistic regressions predicting the likelihood of a paper being published in a journal indexed in Scopus (model 1) and in a journal indexed in Scopus and published in English (model 2). The results, presented in table 1, provide support to our three hypotheses. The probability of an article appearing in a global journal increased with the proportion of authors with a PhD from a school in the Global North. This suggests that doctoral training in Global North countries makes authors more likely to submit to and/or be successful at global journals. Having at least one coauthor in the Global North also increased the probability of publication in a global journal. The impact of coauthoring can be explained purely by the preoccupation of Global North colleagues with their tenure requirements, but it also may indicate shared understandings of what are desirable venues for publications and how to arrive at them.<sup>7</sup>

Authorship by PhDs from Global South universities also is positively related to publication in global journals. This suggests that, unlike our expectations, doctorate programs in Argentina are socializing students around similar norms defining what is professionally desirable and providing comparable resources about how to obtain it. If this is the case, arguments about lack of diversity in political science journals may simply be reflecting that scientific communities are smaller. However, the positive and

statistically significant effect of both variables on the likelihood of publication in global journals does not mean that their substantial effect is equal. Figure 2 shows the predicted probabilities as each independent variable changes values. In both plots, the change in probability of publication in global journals from having no authors trained in the developed Global North to having only authors trained in the developed Global North is considerably larger than when going from none to all authors trained in the developing Global South: from 0.14 to 0.48 and from 0.12 to 0.24, respectively.

Departments appear to generate convergence among their faculty's output because articles are more likely to appear in a global journal when their author is from a department with a higher proportion of placements in global journals among recent publications. Because promotion requirements are not formalized in Argentine universities—unlike in the United States and the United Kingdom, for example—we interpreted departmental convergence to be a product of prevailing norms that impact scholars' sense of their own reputation more than their salary goals. Moreover, CONICET appointments appear to have no effect on the probability of publishing in global journals, suggesting that promotion requirements are a less effective incentive to publish in higher-impact journals. In summary, our results suggest that the Argentine contribution to the globalized discipline is made by scholars with ties to the Global North and by those working in a department where there already is an inclination to make that contribution.

Regarding other predictors, some article characteristics appear to make it more or less likely for Argentine scholars to publish in global journals. Democracy and Human Rights and IPE articles have positive and statistically significant coefficients in models 1 and 2, respectively, whereas Foreign Policy Analysis and Theory have opposite results. In general, none of the topics appears to be statistically significant across both models. Choices



**Table 1**  
**Logistic Regressions**

	Dependent Variable	
	Scopus (1)	Scopus + North (2)
Women (Ratio)	-0.273 (0.226)	-0.064 (0.426)
PhD Global North (Ratio)	1.647*** (0.331)	3.124*** (0.610)
PhD Global South (Ratio)	0.920*** (0.254)	1.610*** (0.583)
CONICET (Ratio)	-0.097 (0.231)	-0.499 (0.440)
Peers in Scopus (Ratio)	1.537*** (0.509)	
Peers in Scopus + North (Ratio)		2.727** (1.082)
Coauthor North	1.345*** (0.457)	2.793*** (0.607)
Topic: Democracy and Human Rights	0.542* (0.295)	0.783 (0.519)
Topic: International Political Economy	0.055 (0.234)	0.888** (0.434)
Topic: Foreign Policy Analysis	-0.680*** (0.244)	-0.427 (0.451)
Topic: Security	-0.542* (0.291)	-0.074 (0.544)
Topic: Theory	-0.358 (0.358)	-1.826* (0.992)
Area: Latin America	0.052 (0.256)	0.126 (0.447)
Methods: Quantitative	1.158*** (0.427)	2.865*** (0.558)
References: North	-0.120 (0.409)	0.745 (0.727)
Constant	-2.019*** (0.408)	-5.400*** (0.855)
Observations	721	721
Log Likelihood	-317.094	-114.093
Akaike Information Criterion	664.187	258.186

Notes: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

English-language journals. A higher presence of Global North authors among the referenced literature apparently has no statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. On a positive note, results do not seem to vary when articles are authored by a higher proportion of women.

### CONCLUSIONS

With claims about political science becoming more globalized coexisting with enduring critiques of the discipline being dominated by scholars from wealthier Western countries, this article had two goals. First, we wanted to empirically observe through publication patterns which of these two trends better represents the reality of IR communities in the Global South. Analysis of a dataset of publications by IR scholars based in Argentina—a country that we contend is representative of other middle-income countries in the Global South—in the past decade showed that whereas local academic production is confined mostly to regional and less-visible publication circuits, approximately 25% appears in more globalized and visible journals, understood as those indexed by Scopus. This suggests that scientific communities in the Global South are segmented, with only a minority being inclined and able to access higher-impact journals.

We also tested different explanations for this segmentation and found that ties to Global North academia—by having a PhD from a Global North university and coauthoring with a Global North scholar—render Argentine scholarship more likely to appear in global journals. We also found that this segmentation tends to divide university departments between those with faculty who publish in global journals and those who do so in regional and local journals. We argue this is a product of scholars following different norms as well as having access to unequal information. Each subcommunity has its own norms about what is professionally desirable and disseminates information about how to obtain it.

Our analysis highlights the importance of going beyond global indexation systems to obtain a more complete picture of publication trends in the Global South. Further research should explore the impact of social elements such as norms and practical knowledge compared to material factors such as economic resources and financial incentives. Interviews and surveys of Global South scholars and journal editors might be more suitable methods for revealing the publishing motives of scholars.

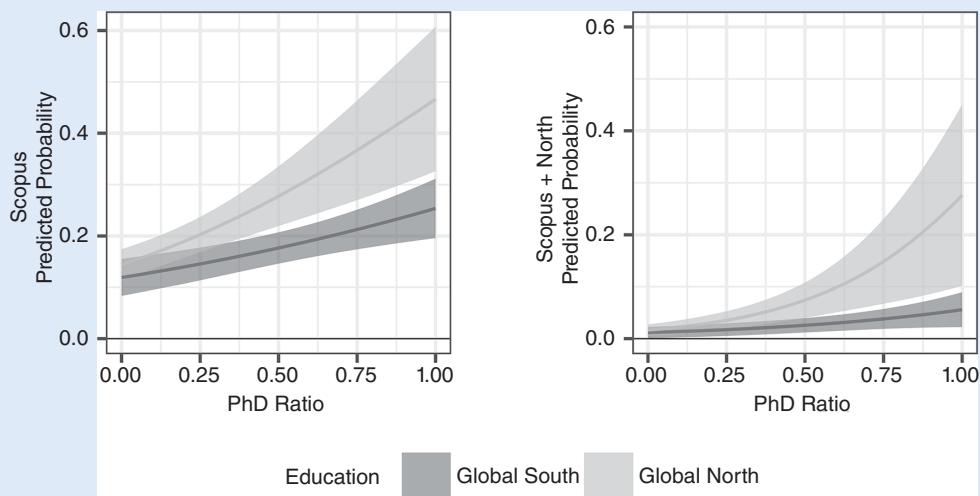
This article contributes to policy-oriented discussions about how to address diversity and exclusion in political science. Initiatives to make journals more accessible and inclusive for scholars in the Global South often are undertaken without a sufficient understanding of the factors that influence the publication decisions of

*This suggests that scientific communities in the Global South are segmented, with only a minority being inclined and able to access higher-impact journals.*

of methods do appear to affect the likelihood of publication in global journals. Although quantitative methods are rare in Argentine IR, they appear to correlate more strongly with global journals, and the relationship appears to be stronger for

scholars. Research into the different motives and incentive structures that characterize academia in the Global South, therefore, is essential for better understanding how we can further globalize the discipline.

Figure 2  
Predicted Probabilities



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#### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research documentation and data that support the findings of this study are openly available on the *PS: Political Science & Politics* Harvard Dataverse at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/PHZ1XZ>.

#### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <http://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096522000373>. ■

#### NOTES

1. See <https://data.worldbank.org/income-level/middle-income>.
2. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021). "Population with Tertiary Education." <https://data.oecd.org/eduatt/population-with-tertiary-education.htm>.
3. We implement these restrictions to make our data collection and analysis manageable. Future studies could extend this to investigate countries beyond Argentina and subfields beyond IR.
4. With some exceptions, the community is composed almost exclusively of Argentine nationals.
5. Scopus monitors its content to identify and discontinue predatory journals. See a description of the process at [www.elsevier.com/connect/the-guardians-of-scopus](http://www.elsevier.com/connect/the-guardians-of-scopus).
6. Among all unique authors in our dataset with a Global North PhD, 53% obtained their degree in Western Europe, 30% in the United States, 12% in the United Kingdom, and the remainder in Australia and Japan. We also ran the same model

including PhD students in Global North universities and the results remained unchanged. The subset of authors in our dataset with a degree from the Global South is dominated by those scholars who obtained their PhD in Argentina (88%). The remainder corresponds to other Latin American countries, primarily Brazil, and to one case of a graduate from a Turkish university.

7. For replication materials, see Montal, Pauselli, and Yamin (2022).

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