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Beth Evans  
*Brooklyn College*

Beth Evans  
*CUNY Brooklyn College*

Nanette Johnson  
*CUNY New York City College of Technology*

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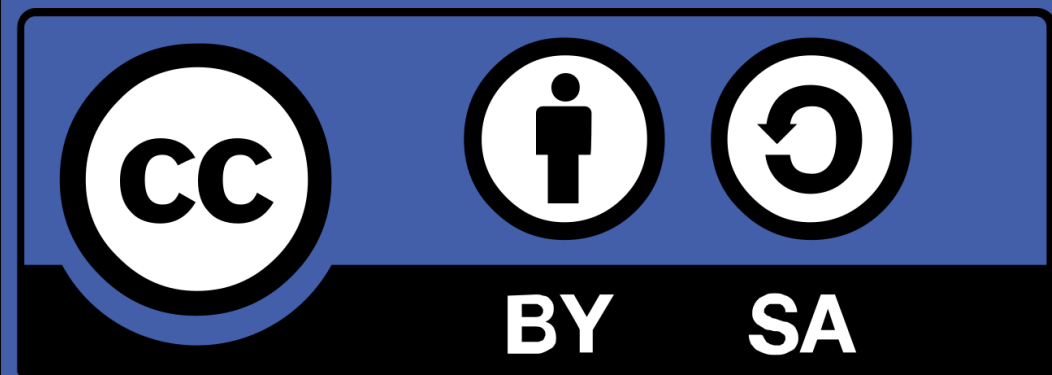
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# Global North and South in Scholarly Publishing: The Affiliations of Authors and the Situating of Journals

## Beth Evans and Nanette Johnson



### Author Representation Within a Single Discipline

**Research Question:** Are GS authors disproportionately represented in GS situated titles and are GN authors disproportionately represented in GN situated titles for a given chosen discipline?

**Method:** The researchers selected the top four SJR ranked SciELO (GS) and Web of Science (GN) titles listed in SCImago in the field of biotechnology that accept articles published in English. The researchers reviewed the most recent issue of for each title selected and examined the presence of GS/GN researchers in each. For articles with multiple authors, they used the affiliation of the first listed author to determine GN or GS status.

	GN Authors	GS Authors
<b>SciELO Journals (GS)</b>		
<i>Crop Breeding and Applied Biotechnology</i>	0	18
<i>Food Science and Technology</i>	0	24
<i>BAG - Journal of Basic and Applied Genetics</i>	0	5
<i>Vita</i>	0	5
<b>Web of Science Journals (GN)</b>		
<i>Nature Methods</i>	12	0
<i>Nature Biotechnology</i>	7	1
<i>Nano Today</i>	3	7
<i>PLoS Medicine</i>	10	2

**Results:** GN authors are not publishing in the GS journals selected for the field of biotechnology. Both GN and GS authors are publishing in GN journals in the field, but a majority of the authors published, except in the journal *Nano Today*, are GN authors.

### The Problem

An important goal of the open access movement in scholarly publishing has been to broaden access to research globally. According to the *Open Access Scholarly Information Sourcebook*, "it is now well understood that many institutes and universities in developing countries are unable to meet the high cost of subscriptions and as a consequence researchers have remained informationally impoverished and professionally isolated."

Electronic delivery and removing paywalls has allowed published, open access research to flow more readily across borders. Furthermore, although subscription publishing platforms continue to be maintained as they have been historically in the Global North (GN), new publishers, often located in the Global South (GS), have seen an opportunity to offer platforms of their own that publish in an open access environment. Journals situated in the GS, nonetheless, have often been suspected as being predatory, in part, because of their unfamiliar origins.

A faculty member's request for the researchers to recommend an appropriate publication platform led them to look for legitimate, discipline-appropriate open access titles in the *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ). The researchers and the faculty member are all affiliated with a GN academic institution. The researchers' precursory review of journals in the DOAJ appropriate for the subject reveal a number of research questions to explore:

- Would a GN situated scholar consider publication in a GS situated journal, particularly, given a suspicion around GS journals of predatory practices and concerns about tenure? Further:
- Would an examination of the institutional affiliations of the contributors to GS and GN situated journals reveal any imbalances in participation? Specifically:
  - Is there an imbalance in the distribution of GS and GN authors predominant in any particular broad discipline?
  - Is there an imbalance in the distribution of GS and GN authors predominant in particular titles within a single narrow discipline?

The presentation here is not meant to be conclusive, but rather to suggest directions for scholarship in the examination of place in scholarly publishing.

#### Definitions and Standards

Global South (GS) – the term emerged in recent decades to connote disadvantaged nations and regions bound through a common history of imperialistic colonialism. The term is intended to replace previously used terms, "Third World" and "Developing Nations." The standard used to determine GS status is countries labeled by the United Nations in its *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2017* as "Economies in transition" and "Developing economies." The term is abbreviated in this research as "GS."

Global North (GN) - The term is intended to replace previously used terms, "First World" and "Developed Nations." It should not be seen as geographic locator, but rather as indicator of historical levels of dominance in the scholarly arena. It is abbreviated here as "GN."

Situated - indicates the nation where the institution or organization responsible for a journal is located or where an author is affiliated.

### Author Representation in a Broad Range of Disciplines

**Research Question:** Are GS authors disproportionately represented in GS situated titles and are GN authors disproportionately represented in GN situated titles across a range of disciplines?

**Method:** The researchers selected a single GS (open access) and GN (subscription) journal from a representative field of study within the humanities, the social sciences, the sciences, the arts, engineering, education and business. The GS journals included accept articles in English, have been included in the DOAJ for at least two years and do not charge authors for inclusion. The GN journals are from major publishers and ranked high in SCImago SJR. The researchers reviewed the most recent issue of publications for each title selected and examined the presence of GS/GN researchers in each. For articles with multiple authors, they used the affiliation of the first listed author to determine GN or GS status.

	Humanities	Science	Engineering and Applied Science	Social Science	Arts	Education	Business
GS OA Titles	<i>Scholae: Ancient Philosophy and the Classical Tradition</i> (Novosibirsk State University Press, Russian Federation)	<i>Nuclear Receptor Research</i> (AgiAL Publishing House, Egypt)	<i>Journal of Applied Oral Science</i> (SciELO, Brazil)	<i>Journal of Liberty and International Affairs</i> (Institute for Research and European Studies, Macedonia)	<i>Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education</i> (Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia)	<i>Issues in Language Studies</i> (Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia)	<i>Management: Journal of Sustainable Business and Management Solutions in Emerging Economies</i> (Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Belgrade, Serbia)
GN authors	2	4	12	2	0	0	0
GS authors	19	1	63	4	11	6	7
GN Subscription Titles	<i>Hesperia</i> (American School of Classical Studies at Athens)	<i>Nature Reviews Genetics</i> (Springer)	<i>Dental Materials</i> (Elsevier)	<i>International Organization</i> (Cambridge)	<i>Journal of Creative Behavior</i> (Wiley)	<i>Review of Educational Research</i> (Sage)	<i>Academy of Management Annals</i> (AOM)
GN authors	4	4	9	3	2	4	13
GS authors	0	0	8	1	3	0	0

**Results:** GS affiliated authors predominate in nearly all GS situated journals and GN affiliated authors predominate in nearly all GN situated journals. There is one exceptional title in each of the two categories where the majority author affiliation does not match the global situation of the title. These outliers are the sciences, where there is a majority of GN authors represented in the GS title examined, and the arts, where there is a majority of GS authors represented in the GN title examined.

### Building and Maintaining the GS Publishing Universe: A Review Essay

Some of the challenges of establishing open access journals in the GS include "political instability, pervasive corruption and inefficiency (at every level of the process, including Western 'donors'), systemic economic inequality, environmental degradation, and racial, religious, and gender discrimination," all of which "contribute to information asymmetry, between countries and within them" (Baker, 2009).

Successes in addressing such challenges are celebrated, with attention typically paid to key players in the southern hemisphere such as BioMed Central's "Open Access Africa" initiative (McKay, 2011) and the Sao Paulo Research Foundation's development of SciELO (Catanzaro, Mirand and Palmer, 2014).

Nonetheless, despite the growth of open access journals in the GS (Ghane and Niazmand, 2016), problems remain. Andrew Joseph, for example, has found that the "South African publishing industry is still dealing with isolation issues – the 'for ourselves' approach created during apartheid." Moreover, South African published journals "do not have a large distribution network, little or no digital production, inconsistent standards of production, poor technology and prohibitive costs of changing the situation" (2015).

These issues that beset GS publishing and contribute to its poor integration into global scholarly communications are further complicated by poor representation of GS content in traditional finding tools (subject databases). Shuva and Taisir note that there is "no centrally coordinated database of recognized academic journals in Bangladesh, which lead to some universities accepting a publication for tenure and another university not accepting the same journal" (2016).

Marton Demeter considers the twentieth century sovietization of Eastern European (EE) countries as a type of colonization similar to the colonization perpetuated in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Evidence shows that few authors from EE countries publish in leading international journals, and few Eastern Europeans edit these same journals. Moreover, most EE journals are "almost imperceptible to the global audience because at least 95% of these periodicals are not indexed in any well-known databases."

Build it and they will come, unfortunately, is not a motto easily applied to GS journal publishing. Indeed, GS authors may find these venues and welcome the opportunity for a place to publish their research. But will they stand alone, without the company of their GN peers, and will their work continue to go undiscovered? Reluctance to cross economic, geographic and psycho-socially constructed boundaries may stand in the way of open access scholarship becoming truly accessible to all.

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### Willingness of Authors to Publish in Other-Situated Journals

Would a GN situated author consider publication in a GS situated journal? Historically, the reverse process has been a given. Consider:

- Abdus Salam, the Pakistani theoretical physicist and Nobel Prize winner (1979), published 61 articles in an American Physical Society top-ranked journal, *Physical Review*, between 1950 and 1993;
- Askwar Hilonga, a Tanzanian chemical engineer and the first ever winner of the Africa Prize for Engineering (2015), has published in a number of Elsevier journals including *Applied Surface Science*, *Journal of Hazardous Materials* and the *Journal of Alloys and Compounds*;
- Ayorkor Korsah, a Ghanaian computer scientist and winner of the Tribeca Disruptive Innovation Award (2013), saw her co-authored article, "A comprehensive taxonomy for multi-robot task allocation," in the Sage publication, *The International Journal of Robotics Research* the same year she was awarded the prize.
- Alberto R. Kornbliht, the Argentinian molecular biologist, commented in an article in *Nature* that his lab might be on the "periphery of scientific research," but he and his team, who are working on alternative RNA splicing, "have shown that they can do world-class research despite tight government budgets and three-month delivery times for reagents that can cost three times as much as they would in the United States or Europe." Nonetheless, even though Kornbliht has been willing to accommodate to the limits of his national situation, his lab's research has been published in many GN journals including *Science*, *Cell Reports*, the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, *Molecular Cell*.

GS titles, new to the publication arena, are fighting to keep GS authors publishing locally. Barun Kumar Nayak writes an editorial discouraging his compatriots from publishing in GN journals and asks them instead to publish in the *Indian Journal of Ophthalmology*:

- "Ophthalmologists shy away from subscribing to foreign journals because of their high cost. Indian authors who choose to publish their work in any foreign journal lose their chances of being recognized for their work among Indian fraternity – a place where they can be identified most... Indian researchers conduct their study on an Indian population. The outcomes of these studies are more relevant to Indian ophthalmologists, since their clinical practice is on a similar population and environment."

Furthermore, GN authors, when asked if they would consider publishing in a reputable, open access GS journal in their field, commented:

- "I would not consider publishing an article in the journal because I don't know it and I've never seen it cited in anything that I've read."
- "I had not heard of this journal before you brought it to my attention. After looking at it, I can't envision publishing in it. That's not a definitive 'NO,' it just means that I don't know enough to be sure that my work would reach an audience that I'd like to reach."

### Conclusions

GS authors publish more frequently in GS journals than GN authors regardless of the field of study. GN authors publish in smaller numbers than GS authors in GS journals, and may admit to a reluctance to do so. Both GN and GS authors publish in GN journals, but GN authors generally predominate. The absence of GN authors as contributors to GS journals and their unfamiliarity with GS titles in their fields means open access research will continue to face situational boundaries.

### Further Study

The research presented is preliminary, inspired by a classroom faculty member's request for a recommendation for an appropriate journal for her field of research. Heightened concerns about predatory publishing have encouraged faculty to be cautious about where they submit their research. As a consequence, many are skeptical about unfamiliar journals, particularly those published in the Global South. This research shows limited evidence of the avoidance of GS titles by GN authors, but further research could determine more conclusively if there is a significant reluctance among GN authors to publish in GS journals. GN faculty were surveyed with a single question to determine their willingness to publish in GS journals.

An expanded survey might:

- Dig more deeply into GN author attitudes towards publication in GS journals both as readers and contributors;
- Examine the differing perception GS authors might have towards GN and GS journals and their thoughts about their own likelihood of being published in either.

Further study of evidence of where authors are publishing might also examine:

- A fuller range of journals representing more fields of study across a number of broad disciplines;
- A fuller range of journals within a single discipline;
- More titles in the outlier broad disciplines to look for possible trends;
- Multiple years of each title studied to determine change over time;
- The variety of national affiliations of GS authors related to the situation of particular GS journals.

Beyond looking at the affiliation of authors who contribute to GN and GS situated journals, further research might also examine:

- Instances of GN and GS author citations in GN and GS situated journals.