Says who? Setting the agenda on global education in development conferences

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Abstract: The Global South is vastly underrepresented in international development. Previous research has highlighted the lack of Southern scholars in research and academia, as well as in the field of international development. This research expands on previous investigations by examining the representation of the Global South in development conferences, particularly in the field of education development. Through an analysis of events held between 2019 and 2021 by UNESCO-IBE, the OECD Education and Skills division, and the WBG Education division, this research uncovers that an average of 1 in 4 speakers represented a Global South country in events. Given the influential role of these organizations in shaping international education policy, this research emphasizes the need for greater efforts to amplify the voices and contributions of Southern scholars in education development. By addressing historical legacies of colonialism and challenging the dominance of Global North countries in knowledge production, these organizations can foster inclusivity and promote a more equitable representation of perspectives in the field of education development.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAS	American Astronomical Society
ADB	African Development Bank
AEC	African Economic Conference
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CERI	Centre for Educational Research and Innovation
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DOAJ	Directory of Open Access Journals
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECR	Early Career Researcher
EFF	Education Fast Forward
FWE	Forum for World Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICLR	International Conferences on Learning Representations
IMCC	International Marine Conservation Congress
IO	International Organization
ISAE	International Society for Applied Ethology
JCR	Journal Citation Reports
LDC	Least Developed Country
L1	First language
MES	Ministry of Education
NAMS	North American Membrane Society
NORRAG	Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PI	Principal Investigator
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WBG	World Bank Group
WCCES	World Council of Comparative Education Societies
WoS	Web of Science

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I.   Introduction

Southern voices are vastly underrepresented in development. Despite the fact that most work in development takes place in the Global South, the voices of individuals from the Global North are better represented in the field. In research and academia, scholars from the Global South are far less likely to be published or cited. Graham et al. (2011) analyzed references from over 9,500 journals in the sciences and social sciences and found that more journals are indexed from the United States and the United Kingdom than the rest of the world combined. A significant disparity also exists between scholars from the Global South and the Global North regarding their participation in conferences. Based on data from seven well-reputed international development conferences held between 2010 and 2019, Amarante et al. (2021) found that only 9% of papers presented at these conferences were authored by Southern researchers. In this same study, Amarante et al. (2021) observed that only one out of seven conferences was held in a Global South country. The lack of Global South representation in development extends to education development, wherein Southern countries have consistently been "portrayed as lacking the technical and professional expertise that would contribute to what are supposed to be "modern" models of educational development," resulting in marginalization in scholarship and discourse in the field (Smith & Sargent, 2022).

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic brought about unprecedented disruptions worldwide. During the period from 2019 to 2021, international conferences and events underwent a significant transition to online platforms. This shift not only ensured the continuity of conferences but also presented new prospects for fostering inclusivity, accessibility, and diversity in participation.

This research aims to shed light on the representation, or the lack thereof, of scholars from the Global South within international organizations dedicated to education development. The focus of this study is on the participation of Global South scholars in development conferences, which serve as critical arenas for the dissemination of research and knowledge in the field, often with the objective of shaping international education policy. Of particular interest is the examination of the representation of Global South scholars in development conferences both prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the purpose of this research, I investigate events held between the years 2019 and 2021 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) International Bureau of Education (IBE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Education and Skills division, and the World Bank Group's (WBG) Education division. This research considers the composition of speakers at global conferences and seeks to understand the extent to which Global South scholars are ultimately present in ongoing policy debates in education.

This study aims to contribute to the Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education (NORRAG) new initiative called #TheSouthAlsoKnows, which strives to amplify the voices of Global South scholars in education and address the imbalanced flow of expertise and decision-making from the North to the South (NORRAG, 2023).

Beginning with an introduction to important terminology used in this research, I define terms such as the "Global South" and "development," addressing the historical and present-day implications of the terms. The following section presents literature relevant to this research and concludes with justifications for the purpose of this study. Next, I present my theoretical and data collection approach to this research in the Methodology section before presenting my findings. Then, I discuss my results and offer my recommendations as to how the organizations selected for this study can better foster inclusivity of the Global

South in the field of education development.

II.   Terminology

In this section, I define certain terminology used throughout this research. I define the terms I use by contextualizing them in history and the present-day. The goal of defining terminology is to offer insight into the evolution of certain terms which are often discussed in the field of development, as well as to critique them according to their usefulness in the present.

A. The "Global South"

The concept of the "Global South" emerged during the post-Cold War era as part of the Third World Project, which aimed to foster solidarity among independent nations (Kalter, 2017). Initially, the term "Third World" was used to refer to countries outside Western Europe and the United States (US), with the latter considering themselves the "First World" based on Eurocentric ideologies (Kalter, 2017). What Mahler (2017) describes as a "metaphor for global relations of inequity and as microcosms of the oppression suffered under transnational forms of racial capital," also known as the "Third World," was later replaced by the term "Global South."

The first mention of the "South" in the context of development was made by the United Nations (UN) in the mid-20th century (Haug, 2021). Over time, the term expanded to encompass geopolitical and economic realities, moving beyond a narrow "focus on development or cultural differences" between the North and South (Dados & Connell, 2012). At present, the term "Global South" references "an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and the differential economic and social changes" that perpetuate significant disparities in living standards, life expectancy, and access to resources (Dados & Connell, 2012).

The definition and geographic boundaries of the "Global South" vary depending on the criteria used, but the term generally includes countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. However, it is important to bear in mind that the term is not all-encompassing. Several highly developed nations are located in the global southern hemisphere, such as Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore, which are not considered part of the "Global South." It is also important to note that the term "Global South" can refer to countries that are less economically developed, socially disadvantaged, or both. One common definition of the Global South is all non-OECD countries. Although the organization has expanded to include some countries in Asia and Latin America as member states, the OECD is primarily made up of wealthy European and North American nations, thus this definition is generally a sensible way of distinguishing between the Global North and Global South. Other popular ways of defining the Global South include using the World Bank's classifications of low- or middle-income countries or looking at human development classifications based on the Human Development Index (HDI), which ranks a country's level of development based on a number of factors related to life expectancy, education, and living standards.

Nonetheless, in recent years, the term "Global South" has faced criticism for being outdated in its portrayal of less developed countries (Mahler, 2017). Critics argue that there are multiple "Souths in the geographic North and Norths in the geographic South," highlighting the evolving dynamics of global power structures and development trajectories (Mahler, 2017). The conventional narrative of the South catching up with the North no longer adequately captures the nature of global power dynamics and development trends. Horner (2019) explains:

Northern countries may actually be evolving southward, thereby upending the developmentalist trajectory of countries in the South playing catch-up to those in the North. Comaroff & Comaroff have argued that 'contemporary world historical processes are visibly altering received geographies of core-and-periphery, relocating southward not only some of the most innovative and energetic modes of producing value, but [operating as] the driving impulse of contemporary capitalism as both a material and cultural formation' (2012).

As "there is much South in the North, much North in the South, and…. more of both to come in the future," the growing interconnectedness and blurring of traditional boundaries around the world raises doubts about the value and relevance of categorizing countries into the Global South and the Global North (Horner, 2019). While evolving global realities necessitate the assessment of the usefulness of the concept of the Global South, I have chosen to employ it for the purpose of this research.

B. Who are the "developing" in "development" studies?

The terms "development" and "developing" country carry significant implications which are also important to address in this research. Many of the presently "developing" countries are former colonies. While using the term "developing" country, it is important to keep in mind how historical experiences of colonization have shaped the current socio-economic conditions in most Global South countries. Legacies of colonialism, including resource extraction, exploitation, and cultural domination, have had lasting effects on the development trajectories of "developing" countries. At the same time, the field of "development" exists largely as a byproduct of colonialism and maintains a knowledge hierarchy that has perpetuated Western-centric perspectives wherein knowledge flows from the Global North to the Global South.

Post-colonial and post-development approaches have examined the North-South binary and its geographical constructions of difference (Said, 1979). Scholars, such as Escobar (1995), have highlighted the social construction of Asia, Africa, and Latin America as the "Third World" and how it served as a powerful apparatus of control. The notion of a "developed" West and a "developing" rest was used to justify intervening to aid developing countries (Kothari, 2005). The work of scholars, like Said and Escobar, challenge Eurocentrism inherent in "development" studies (Chakrabarty, 2000) and confront assumptions of Western superiority (Lawson, 2007). It is important to deconstruct the binary and also recognize the Global North as a site of development studies research, considering that the many themes of development studies pertinent to both the Global North and the Global South (Horner, 2019; Radcliffe, 2005; Lawson, 2007). As discussed in Maxwell (1998), themes such as poverty reduction, political development, governance, gender inequality, social capital, and social exclusion are still relevant to many countries in both the Global North and the Global South.

While I use the terms "developing" and "development" throughout this research, I do so with consideration for the implications they carry which I have discussed here.

III.   Literature

In this section, I present the literature which informs my knowledge on topics including the South-North divide in research and academia and the South-North divide in access to research. I also present previous research into the representation of the Global South in the

field of development, considering the field of education development, in particular.

A. South-North divide in research and academia

Southern scholars are significantly underrepresented in the realm of research and academia. This phenomenon has been documented on numerous occasions by researchers. For example, Graham et al. (2011) mapped the distribution of academic knowledge throughout the world. Analyzing data from the Web of Knowledge Journal Citation Reports (JCR) based on references from over 9,500 journals in the sciences and social sciences, the study revealed a substantial disparity in journal indexing between the US, the United Kingdom (UK), and the rest of the world combined (Graham et al., 2011). Western European countries accounted for the majority of publications outside of the US and the UK, while Global South countries were vastly underrepresented. Strikingly, publications from Switzerland alone were indexed more than three times as frequently as those from the entire continent of Africa (Graham et al., 2011).

Research by Das et al. (2013) demonstrated that the research output of countries is closely linked to their per-capita gross domestic product (GDP). Countries with higher GDP tend to have a more significant research output, further exacerbating the inequality in knowledge production and dissemination. This is also true for countries with higher levels of human development. Cummings & Hoebink (2017) delved into the connection between a country's ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI) and its research output. Examining data collected from the Web of Science (WoS) database and journal websites of well-known academic journals between 2012 and 2014, the study explored the representation of scholars from developing countries as authors in scientific journals. With a sample of 2,112 articles, Cummings & Hoebink found that 43% of authors were from the UK or the US, 43% were from countries with high human development, and only 14% were from developing countries (2017).

Within Africa, research output is not only low but also heavily skewed. Tijssen (2007) reported a decline in Africa's contribution to global knowledge production, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. The share of global science publications from Sub-Saharan Africa decreased from 1% in 1987 to 0.7% in 1996, representing a significant decline with no sign of recovery (Tijssen, 2007). South Africa and Egypt dominated the publication landscape, accounting for a considerable proportion of African publications in international journals during the period from 1996 to 2004 (Tijssen, 2007). South Africa contributed to over 31% of the publications, while Egypt accounted for 52% (Tijssen, 2007).

At the same time, there is a lack of collaboration and co-publication between researchers from the Global South and their counterparts in the Global North. Dahdouh-Guebas et al. (2003) explored this issue by examining research carried out in the world's Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in cooperation with research institutions located in these countries. Analyzing the Current Contents database of over 7,000 scientific journals, they found that the majority of published papers originated from research institutions in the Global North, with a significant absence of co-authorship with research institutions in LDCs (Dahdouh-Guebas et al., 2003). South-North collaborations were far less frequent than North-North collaborations (Dahdouh-Guebas et al., 2003). In addition to low representation and co-publication rates in academic journals, southern scholars were also less likely to be cited and less likely to serve on editorial boards of prestigious journals (Amarante et al., 2021; Cummings & Hoebink, 2017; Chelwa, 2019). These patterns have further perpetuated the imbalance and marginalization faced by scholars from the Global South.

B. South-North divide in access to research

Southern scholars face several structural barriers that hinder their ability to contribute and gain visibility for their expertise and knowledge on a global scale. As most well-known and reputable journals are dominated by staff from the Global North, particularly from Anglophone countries like the US and the UK, the majority of publications in these journals are authored by scholars from Northern Anglophone countries. Previous research has shed light on the South-North divide in academia and research, emphasizing the persistence of structural barriers that reinforce the Global North as the primary center of global knowledge dissemination.

The linguistic hegemony of English further perpetuates the South-North divide in the field of development. English dominates academia and research, serving as the lingua franca across most disciplines, including the social sciences. Highly regarded peer-reviewed journals are predominantly English-only, and previous studies have highlighted the increasing concentration of gatekeeping power held by these journals. There is a clear need for more multilingual publications and authors to address this issue (Belcher, 2007). Scholars often feel compelled to write and publish in English, as described by non-native English speakers from Spain in Martín et al. (2014):

> The desire to communicate the results of their research to the members of the international scientific community was the main motivation for scholars (88.1%)... followed by the aspiration for widespread recognition of their work (86.9%), the need to meet professional promotion requirements (79.8%), and the aim of obtaining more citations (73.8%).

English-medium journals offer greater opportunities for research promotion and funding for scholars (Martín et al., 2014). They also tend to offer higher salaries, providing additional motivation for non-native English speakers to publish in English (Martín et al., 2014).

In addition to writing in English, non-native English speakers are also expected to communicate with a level of proficiency that mirrors that of native speakers in order to have their work accepted in English-medium journals. Ken Hyland, who served as editor for two applied linguistics journals for over two decades, acknowledges that papers written in "poor English" are highly unlikely to be published (Hyland, 2016). Martín et al. (2014) conducted a survey of Spanish scholars, using the Lichter scale to assess their concerns related to publishing in English. The surveyed scholars ranked the fear of making grammatical and rhetorical mistakes, the fear of not presenting results of significant interest to the journal's readers, and the fear of perceived flaws in research design as the top reasons why they might hesitate to submit a paper for publication (Martín et al., 2014).

While all authors face the challenge of presenting a well-designed study on a current topic in a manner that adheres to readers' expectations of sound argumentation in order to be published, Hyland explains that research design and rhetoric are the most influential factors in a well-written paper (2016). Studies have shown that those whose writing deviates from the widely accepted discourse norms of the international English-speaking community, such as syntax or features influenced by their first language (L1), are significantly less likely to have their work published compared to those whose writing aligns with these norms (Martín et al., 2014).

Despite this additional challenge, some argue that native English speakers do not possess a significant advantage over non-native speakers, as both groups are held to the same standard in terms of demonstrating "academic literacy" (Ferguson et al., 2011). For instance, Ferguson et al. (2011) contend that native English speakers must also exhibit academic

literacy in their writing to have their work published. However, it is important to acknowledge that Southern scholars continue to be underrepresented in research, despite their efforts to meet the expectations of English-medium journals.

The dominance of the English language in academia and research has led to a noticeable disparity in publications between non-native English speakers and native speakers. Concurrently, this phenomenon has positioned certain English-speaking Global South countries as regional producers of knowledge. A study by Tijssen (2007), examining African contributions to international research from 1980 to 2004, revealed that South Africa and Kenya were "clearly out-performing" other African countries "in terms of average citation rates, the share of publications cited, and field-normalized citation scores." Tijssen argues that this achievement "is partly a cultural heritage from their English-language science systems that help sustain or enhance their visibility in English-language-dominated international research literature" (2007).

Besides a language barrier which is exclusionary of non-native English speakers, southern scholars face other structural barriers to publishing, such as the costs associated with the peer-review and publishing process. Even though Kenya is one of the nations with the most publications from Africa (Tijssen, 2007), relative to the rest of the world, Kenyan scholars do not often publish research in internationally refereed journals (Mweru, 2010). Low salaries and a lack of resources are cited as some of the primary reasons for which Kenyans do not publish more literature in international journals (Mweru, 2010). Assuming these barriers in many countries exist across sub-Saharan Africa, this might also contribute to the reason why even when the topic of an article is directly related to an issue relevant to sub-Sahran Africa, "an examination of most of the highly ranked journals reveals that few, if any, articles are published by academics from sub-Saharan African universities" (Mweru, 2010).

Another significant barrier faced by Southern scholars in publishing is limited access to research. Southern scholars often lack the same level of access to research as their Northern counterparts. While Global North scholars can freely access open-source research, Southern scholars frequently encounter challenges in accessing the same information, often having to rely on specialized portals or proxy servers (Cockerill & Knolls, 2008). Access to well-established journals is typically facilitated at an institutional level, but Southern scholars often face hurdles in navigating "complex authorization schemes" (Cockerill & Knolls, 2008).

The difficulties in accessing recent and relevant journal articles and books are cited as primary reasons why African scholars, for example, are less likely to publish in international journals (Mweru, 2010). Limited access to predominantly outdated information puts Southern scholars at a disadvantage when competing with Northern scholars for international publication. Consequently, Southern scholars are more inclined to publish in lesser-known, open-access regional journals (Cockerill & Knolls., 2008). Unfortunately, such journals typically have limited circulation, resulting in poor visibility and readership (Cockerill & Knolls., 2008). This, in turn, leads to limited recognition, few citations, and a lack of authorship, subscriptions, and circulation (Cockerill & Knolls., 2008). Thus, many scholars from the Global South remain "off-networked" and are excluded from active participation in international scholarship and research, although there are signs of change (Swales, 2004).

Cockerill & Knolls (2008) underscore the significance of global accessibility in research. An illustrative example is the transformation of the renowned medical journal MedKnow, which was formerly inaccessible without a paid subscription. However, since adopting an open-access model, the journal has fostered a "circle of accessibility," enabling developing countries to access crucial international knowledge on medicine and medical practices (Cockerill & Knolls, 2008). Open access research serves as a conduit for connecting researchers from the Global South with the international research community and

disseminating knowledge from the Global South to a global audience. Encouragingly, global accessibility to research is progressively increasing. Lund University in Sweden established the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), which tracks the substantial rise in the number of journals offering immediate open access to all research articles. Among the 2,700 journals listed in the DOAJ, a considerable fraction originates from developing countries, including 222 journals from Brazil and 87 based in India (Cockerill & Knolls, 2008).

Initiatives like Bioline, a collaborative Brazilian-Canadian project, have facilitated the free online availability of articles from journals in 24 low-income countries. The project has witnessed a significant surge in the annual number of downloads of full-text articles from its website, from a mere 27,000 in 2000 to 2.5 million in 2006 (Cockerill & Knolls, 2008). This increased traffic spans both developing and developed countries, emphasizing the capacity of open access to foster a connected community of researchers across different nations (Cockerill & Knolls, 2008). Nevertheless, there remains a pressing need to further enhance global research access. Cockerill & Knolls (2008) emphasize that "the simplest and most reliable way to ensure that knowledge is available where and when it is needed is to avoid access barriers altogether through a universal open-access model."

C. Representation of the Global South in development

As previously established, there exists a notable discrepancy in the representation of scholars from the Global South and the Global North across academic and research domains, along with a significant disparity in research accessibility. This holds true in the field of development, where much of the work takes place in the Global South. Southern scholars are significantly underrepresented in development research.

In a study conducted by Amarante et al. (2021), researchers examined the representation of scholars from developing countries in three key areas: publications in development journals, citations in development journals, and participation in development conferences. Regarding publications in development journals, the authors investigated submissions and published papers in four development journals with varying reputations. The study revealed that submissions from Southern researchers accounted for a range of 39% to 63% across all journals. However, only 16% of the published papers were authored by Southern researchers, while 73% were authored by Northern researchers (Amarante et al., 2021). The remaining papers were collaborative efforts between scholars from the Global South and the Global North. Additionally, analyzing the Elsevier Scopus database from 1990 to 2019, Amarante et al. found a statistically significant difference in the frequency of citations received by Southern researchers compared to their Northern counterparts in the top 20 development journals (2021). Another study conducted by Chelwa (2020) echoed these findings, revealing that a significant number of papers on Africa, without a single African-based author, were written by North American authors, with Europe following closely behind. Despite the majority of developing countries being located in the Global South, the literature on development and developing countries is disproportionately dominated by the voice of Northern scholars. This also holds true in the field of education development.

In education, "Countries in the Global South have been marginalized and portrayed as lacking the technical and professional expertise that would contribute to what are supposed to be "modern" models of educational development." (Smith & Sargent, 2022). The Global South has been marginalized and excluded "from forums where policy decisions impacting education and democratic development are made. They have been treated as subjects to be discussed and decisions have been made on their behalf as to what educational model would be suitable for them. The establishment of a modern educational system has aimed to correct their primitivities and deficiencies, and socialize citizens of the Global South to what are

supposed to be 'modern ideals'" (Smith & Sargent, 2022). This lack of inclusion extends to development conferences as well.

Examining the representation of Global South scholars at seven highly regarded international development conferences held between 2010 and 2019, Amarante et al. (2021) found that researchers from developing countries were significantly underrepresented compared to their counterparts from Global North institutions. Out of all the papers presented at these conferences, only 9% were authored by Southern researchers, while 57% were authored by Northern researchers (Amarante et al., 2021). Notably, of the seven conferences studied, only one was held in the Global South. The African Development Bank's (ADB) African Economic Conference (AEC) stood out as the only conference where more than half of the participants were Southern researchers, while their presence at other conferences was minimal.

Development conferences play a pivotal role in shaping policy-making and influencing the global development research agenda. As these gatherings serve as critical forums for the exchange of ideas and knowledge, allowing experts from various backgrounds to collaboratively address pressing challenges, the participation of researchers at these conferences not only impacts their publication records and career advancement but also shapes the future trajectory of the field of development (Amarante et al., 2021). International conferences contribute to shaping global policy agendas, serving as vital platforms for researchers to remain up to date with the latest research trends and disseminate their work within the scientific community (Puccinelli et al., 2022). Thus, addressing the underrepresentation of Southern scholars at development conferences is essential for fostering a more equitable and inclusive research landscape while ensuring that the voices and perspectives of scholars from the Global South are adequately represented and integrated into policy-making processes.

D. COVID-19

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual conferences emerged as an alternative response to the challenges posed by travel restrictions to attend in-person conferences. Prior to the pandemic, "most conferences were held in-person and provided limited attendance opportunities for many researchers from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly early career researchers (ECRs), researchers from low- and middle-income countries, and junior principal investigators (PIs)" (Sarabipour et al., 2021). Previously held back by factors such as visa requirements or conference attendance fees, the shift to virtual platforms not only allowed conferences to continue but opened up new opportunities for inclusivity, accessibility, and diversity in participation (Sarabipour et al., 2021). Several studies have explored the effectiveness and impact of virtual conferences, shedding light on their advantages and outcomes.

One study focused on the International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE) virtual meeting in 2020 and aimed to investigate changes in conference attendance and the perceptions of attendees (Chou & Camerlink, 2021). The findings revealed that one of the most highly ranked advantages of the virtual format was the reduced cost of participating in the conference (Chou & Camerlink, 2021). This included options for no registration fee or reduced fees, making the conference more financially accessible to a broader range of individuals. Additionally, participants valued the increased ability to participate, as virtual conferences eliminate the need for travel and accommodation expenses. This allowed individuals who might have faced barriers in attending an in-person conference to engage actively and contribute to the research community. Respondents also appreciated the reduced environmental footprint associated with virtual conferences, as they eliminate the carbon

emissions associated with travel. Interestingly, some participants, particularly ECRs, expressed that the online presentation format was less stressful than presenting at an in-person conference, providing a more comfortable and inclusive environment for knowledge sharing (Chou & Camerlink, 2021).

A similar study focused on the 6th International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC), which made the transition to an online format in response to the pandemic (Niner & Wassermann 2021). The researchers examined participants' perceptions and experiences of the virtual conference and its potential effects on access and inclusion. The results demonstrated a substantial increase in accessibility, particularly for those who would have been unable to attend an in-person event due to financial or personal constraints. The virtual format allowed individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds and geographic locations to participate, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive representation. The increase in attendance by 74% compared to the previous in-person event, accompanied by a 38% rise in the number of countries represented, reflects the expanded reach and global engagement made possible by virtual conferences (Niner & Wassermann 2021). The results of the studies by Chou & Camerlink (2021) and Niner & Wassermann (2021) exemplify the role of virtual conferences in breaking down financial, logistical, and geographical barriers, enabling a broader range of individuals to actively engage in knowledge exchange and collaboration.

Analyzing specific conferences that transitioned from in-person to virtual formats, Skiles et al. (2022) examined the International Conferences on Learning Representations (ICLR), the American Astronomical Society (AAS), and the North American Membrane Society (NAMS) conferences. The researchers found that the virtual conferences attracted more geographically diverse delegations compared to their historical in-person counterparts. Again, the elimination of travel and registration costs associated with in-person events contributed to this greater diversity, allowing individuals from different regions of the world to participate. At the same time, the audiences of these virtual conferences were notably larger, ranging from 40% to 120% above the historical average of in-person conferences (Skiles et al., 2022). Importantly, the virtual format also facilitated a significant increase in the participation of women, with attendance rising between 60% and 260% compared to the baseline of in-person conferences (Skiles et al., 2022). Beyond offering greater accessibility, virtual conferences also have the potential to address the gender disparity often observed in traditional conference settings, providing a more inclusive environment for women researchers to share their work and contribute to the discourse in their field.

A systematic analysis conducted by Wu et al. (2022) examined 24 conferences across various fields, including medicine, biology, and computer science, during the period between January and August 2020. Similar to the results expressed in the aforementioned studies, the researchers of this study reported a substantial increase in the geographical distribution of participants when conferences transitioned to a virtual format. The number of countries represented expanded significantly, with a particular increase in participants from developing countries across Africa, South America, Asia, and Oceania. The virtual conferences attracted a considerably higher number of participants compared to their previous in-person counterparts, indicating a greater reach and engagement within the global research community. Notably, regions such as Oceania, which had limited representation in the previous in-person conferences, experienced a significant increase in attendance in the virtual format. Thus, virtual conferences also have the potential to provide opportunities for researchers from traditionally underrepresented regions to connect, collaborate, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

The collective findings from these studies consistently demonstrate the advantages of shifting to virtual conferences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual formats have not only

allowed conferences to continue in a challenging global context but have also facilitated greater inclusivity, accessibility, and diversity of participants. The reduced cost of participation, elimination of travel barriers, and the ability to connect from anywhere in the world have contributed to the increased accessibility and engagement of individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds and geographic locations. The virtual environment has also shown potential in creating a more inclusive space for underrepresented groups, such as early career researchers and women, to actively participate and share their research (Skiles et al., 2022; Sarabipour, 2020).

This research has already highlighted the necessity for increased representation of Southern scholars and experts in the field of development. International conferences serve as important platforms for knowledge exchange, enabling scholars to share information and deliberate on future prospects. During the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual conferences emerged as a valuable alternative to traditional in-person conferences. In comparison to in-person conferences, virtual conferences are able to overcome participation barriers and broaden geographical representation. They are also able to facilitate the engagement of scholars and experts from the Global South in international discussions. Nonetheless, there is a lack of research examining the representation of Global South scholars in development conferences before and after the COVID-19 era. Considering the potential of virtual conferences to bridge the gap between researchers from different regions and foster global collaborations, this study aims to address this gap by looking at conferences held by organizations working on international education between 2019 and 2021.

IV.   Methodology

In this section, I discuss the methodology which I used to conduct this study. I touch upon my theoretical approach before discussing my approach to data collection. In this section, I also address the reasons for which I chose to look at events held by UNESCO-IBE, the OECD Education and Skills division, and WBG Education.

A. Theoretical approach

In this research, I have taken a post-colonial approach to examining the representation of the Global South in education development. I draw upon theories such as post-colonialism, post-development, and Southern theory to interrogate the historical and contemporary dynamics that shape education policies and practices in relation to the Global South.

Post-colonial theory, as distinguished from post-colonialism, offers a critical lens to analyze the legacies of colonialism and provides alternative accounts of the world (Sharp, 2009). Edward Said's work on Orientalism exemplifies post-colonial theory by exposing how colonial powers constructed binary and hierarchical categorizations that privileged the West and marginalized the rest (Said, 1985). These constructions perpetuated the notion of a superior West and a subordinate rest, with colonial education systems reinforcing these power imbalances. Previously, education was used as a tool of control and assimilation by colonial powers (Malisa and Missedje, 2019). The educational systems implemented in colonized territories were designed to propagate the cultural, social, and economic interests of the colonizers, often at the expense of the indigenous populations (Malisa and Missedje, 2019). In turn, this has created a significant imbalance in access to education whilst perpetuating existing inequalities.

The concept of the Global South, which emerges as a departure from post-colonial theory, is also useful as a framework for analyzing contemporary power dynamics in a globalized world. The Global South can be considered as a broader and more inclusive

category of political subjectivity, transcending geographical boundaries and recognizing shared experiences of the negative impacts of capitalist globalization (Mahler, 2015; Satpathy, 2009).

Similarly to post-colonial theory, post-development thinking questions the assumptions underlying the categorization of regions and countries as "Third World" or "developing" and critiques how these categorizations serve as mechanisms of control (Escobar, 1995). Post-development theory also acknowledges the influence of neo-liberalism in perpetuating global inequalities. Neoliberal representations of the Global South have also reinforced power dynamics and perpetuated the West's perceived superiority. Both capitalism and colonialism have played a distinct role in shaping present-day development outcomes (Ghosh, 2001; Horner, 2019).

Drawing upon the theories of post-colonialism, post-development, and Southern theory, this research ultimately seeks to unveil and challenge the historical and contemporary power dynamics, the North-South binary, and inequalities perpetuated within development policies and practices.

In this research, I observe events held between 2019 and 2021 by three organizations working in the field of education development. I hypothesized that Global South institutions would be underrepresented in comparison with Global North institutions in all events held by the three organizations I selected within the the timeframe of 2019 to 2021. On the other hand, I also hypothesized that the representation of Global South scholars would be likely to increase over time, as events became more accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic in the virtual format.

B. Data collection approach

i. Finding events

The data collection process for my research involved extensive research. For the purpose of this research, I included all events, whether they were open to the public or closed-door. I would begin my search for events by accessing the websites of each of the three organizations selected. If there were an option to filter my search on a website, I would use this feature. Otherwise, I would refer to the events, news, or blog sections of a given website.

Beyond website searches, I also utilized various social media platforms to search for events. My engagement with social media platforms varied depending on an organizations' level of engagement on each platform. All of the organizations I selected were active across Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn but to varying degrees. For example, I found that UNESCO-IBE published more events on Eventbrite than it did on Facebook, whereas the OECD Education and Skills division was most likely to share about its events on Twitter or on their website. Besides Eventbrite, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, other social media platforms which I consulted throughout the data collection process included Vimeo and YouTube. I also used mafe use of external resources such as the Wayback Machine to find information on events from earlier years. Similarly, I consulted the *Genève Internationale* or International Geneva website to find events hosted by UNESCO-IBE which is based in Geneva.

At the outset, my data collection plan was centered exclusively on events organized by international organizations headquartered in Geneva, a city which is renowned for hosting several prominent organizations working in the field of global development. At that time, I had also reached out to representatives of these organizations. However, due to certain

limitations which I later discuss, I decided to broaden the scope of my research to also include international organizations located outside of Geneva.

As part of my data collection process, I recorded 11 key variables for each event included in this research. These variables allowed me to analyze and interpret the data from multiple perspectives. The variables I considered for each event are as follows:

- Event Organizers: I noted the primary organization responsible for organizing the event, providing insight into the institutional affiliation behind the gathering.
- Co-organizers (if any): In cases where multiple organizations collaborated to host the event, I documented the names of co-organizers. This information shed light on partnerships and collaborative efforts within the field of international education development.
- Event Name: I recorded the specific name or title given to each event, allowing for easy identification and reference throughout the research.
- Event Date: The date of each event was noted to establish a chronological framework and track the occurrence of events over time.
- Event Topic: This variable encompassed the thematic focus of the event. It included aspects such as regional emphasis, target audience (e.g., early childhood education, teachers, school directors), or specific subject matters addressed.
- Format of the Event: I classified each event based on its format, distinguishing between in-person, virtual, or hybrid formats. In doing so, I was able to observe a change over time in event format before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Number of Participants: I recorded the total number of participants in each event. This included all roles, such as moderators or discussants, while excluding speakers representing the organizing or co-organizing organizations.
- Number of Participants from the Global South: To assess the representation of scholars from the Global South, I counted the number of scholars representing institutions based in the Global South for each event.
- Full Names of Global South Participants: I documented the full names of individual speakers from the Global South in order to determine the frequency in which any one individual appeared as an event participant over time.
- Global South Countries Represented: For each Global South participant, I identified the country they represented based on the institution they represented at the event.
- Language(s) of the Event: I recorded the language(s) used during the event. This variable provided insights into the linguistic diversity of events.

ii.   Finding individuals

The objective of my research was ultimately to determine the extent to which the Global South was represented in events. Thus, I spent a significant amount of time researching individuals, as well. After determining that an event was held, I would then look to see who participated in the event. To do so, I consulted event agendas or images advertising an event which typically included the names of speakers. I was often able to determine the affiliation of a participant through event agendas and images advertising events. However, this was not always the case. In these instances, I would perform a Google search of the individual, including keywords related to the topic of the event in which they participated. Often, I was directed to the LinkedIn profile of a participant or their biography on the website of the organization(s) with whom they were affiliated. In instances where I could not determine the institution which a participant represented at the time of an event, I excluded the participant from the overall participant count. As opposed to assuming whether a participant was affiliated with a Global South institution based on information I could find, such as

educational backgrounds, I chose to simply exclude the participant when I was not fully certain about them.

iii. Defining the Global South

For the purpose of this research, I defined the Global South non-OECD member countries, consistent with how NORRAG defines the Global South (See: [OECD, 2023] for a list of all OECD member countries).

Despite having defind the Global South as all non-OECD member countries, it is important to note that this definition is not exhaustive and may exclude certain countries that do not fall within the OECD membership but have high levels of development. For example, China, Israel, Singapore, and Albania are examples of countries that are not part of the OECD, but their economic and social development may not align with the typical perception of the Global South. Similarly, there are certain OECD members whose economies better resemble certain economies of Global South countries than those of very wealthy member OECD member states, such as the US or the UK.

iv. Determining whether a speaker is representative of the Global South

Identifying whether a speaker was from a Global South country initially posed a challenge. It is not straightforward to categorize someone as being from the Global South solely based on their birthplace or nationality. For instance, an individual may have been born in a Global South country but hold citizenship in a Global North nation, or they may have migrated to the Global North during their youth and completed their education there. Similarly, someone born in the Global North may have had immigrant parents from the Global South, speak their parents' heritage language, or have other connections to the Global South. Determining a speaker's affiliation with the Global South requires engaging in personal discussions with each speaker in each of the events I observed.

Thus, Instead of attributing a country to each speaker based solely on their place of origin, I considered scholars from the Global South as individuals affiliated with institutions in the Southern hemisphere or those based in the Global South (excluding OECD member states), similar to what Amrante et al. (2021) did in their research on Global South representation in research and development conferences.

C. Organizations

i. UNESCO-IBE

Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, UNESCO-IBE was the first organization which I included in this research. Established in 1925, UNESCO-IBE has focused on promoting educational reform and advancing educational standards worldwide (UNESCO-IBE, 2023). The organization has played an important role in addressing the educational needs of post-colonial nations in recognizing the importance of decolonizing education systems and promoting inclusive, culturally relevant, and contextually appropriate approaches to learning. Since its establishment, UNESCO-IBE has focused on enhancing educational policies, curriculum development, teacher training, and educational research to support the aspirations of newly independent countries.

A key contribution of UNESCO-IBE to international education is its emphasis on the preservation and promotion of indigenous knowledge and languages. It recognized that indigenous cultures and languages were essential for fostering identity, self-esteem, and the

overall well-being of individuals and communities (UNESCO, 2021). By advocating for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in educational curricula, UNESCO-IBE aims to empower marginalized populations and redress the historical injustices perpetuated by colonial education. UNESCO-IBE has also played a pivotal role in promoting international cooperation and knowledge exchange in the field of education. It served as a platform for countries to share best practices, innovative approaches, and research findings (UNESCO-IBE, 2023). Through its initiatives, UNESCO-IBE has facilitated the transfer of expertise, resources, and ideas across nations, enabling them to learn from each other's experiences and adapt successful strategies to their own contexts.

Over the years, UNESCO-IBE has expanded its scope and evolved to address emerging challenges in education development. It continues to advocate for equitable access to quality education, the promotion of inclusive and sustainable development, and the recognition of the diverse cultural and linguistic heritage of nations. UNESCO-IBE has a significant influence on global education policy through its present-day activities which include knowledge production, curriculum development, capacity-building and training initiatives, and policy development and advocacy efforts (UNESCO-IBE, 2023). Recognizing the impact of UNESCO-IBE's approach to education development and the crucial role it plays in shaping global education, I chose to include the organization in my research.

ii.   OECD Education and Skills

Based in Paris, France, OECD Education and Skills was established as a division of the OECD. Since its conception, the organization has played a significant role in education policy making and knowledge production. The OECD Education and Skills has been heavily involved in establishing educational standards and developing learning metrics, demonstrating its commitment to shaping the field of education (Martens and Jakobi, 2010; Breakspear, 2012; Meyer and Schiller, 2013; Piro, 2019). At present, the organization is primarily known for its international educational measurement system called the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

PISA has had a significant impact on national policies and educational systems. Critics argue that the OECD's involvement in education, particularly through PISA, has almost transformed into "a system of governance" (Xioman & Auld, 2020). Sarmurzun et al. (2021) explains:

> PISA has been rigorously examined and roundly criticized by educational scholars around the world for the past 20 years. Zhao (2020) characterizes this period as "two decades of havoc." Several studies have shown that PISA has a significant impact on policy initiatives in many countries. This has reached the point where PISA has virtually become synonymous with the OECD: when addressing the OECD's impact on education, most academics refer to PISA (Seitzer et al., 2021). Inevitably, PISA is the subject of heated debate. Although Schleicher (2007) argues that the PISA results give "policy-makers and practitioners helpful tools to improve quality, equity, and efficiency in education by revealing some common features in students, schools, and education systems that do well," OECD research could threaten the provision of public education. One of the critiques raised about the OECD in light of its global policy making impact is that the organization is inherently politicized in favor of universalistic notions that can exacerbate current inequality between various regions and countries (Zurn, 2014). Therefore, Europe and North America, as well as a broader range of member States, could be seen as exerting disproportionate control over less developed places (Volante et al., 2017). Kazakhstan is a clear example of

this, as the curriculum for a renewed education system has been prepared in collaboration with Cambridge University (Bridges, 2014).

Taking an example from Kazakhstan whose PISA 2018 results revealed a decline in reading literacy among Kazakhstani students, and Kazakh President, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, immediately responded to address initiatives the country would take to improve results in the coming years. President Tokayev publicly stressed the importance of cultivating a high reading culture and developing reading literacy among elementary school students at 4th session of the National Council of Public Trust, prompting Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education (MES) to consider modifications to the national curriculum, specifically in Kazakh literature, and exploring discussions on the inclusion of world literature in school curricula (Sarmurzun et al., 2021).

Aside from PISA, the OECD Education and Skills division influences global education policy through its production of the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) and the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), whereas they also conduct activities focus on policy development and implementation related to topics such as the future of education, vocational education and training (VET), and early childhood education (ECE) (OECD, 2023).

Considering the influential role of the OECD Education and Skills division in influencing policy-making in education, I have chosen to include it in this study. This organization is also interesting to include, based on the fact that it is governed by OECD member states which I consider as Global North countries in this research.

iii.   WBG Education

Located in Washington, D.C., US, the WBG Education's division is the final organization I chose to include in this research. The WBG's Education division is part of the World Bank, which was founded in 1944 and serves as the largest source of financing for developing countries. In education, the World Bank has emerged as a key driver of global education policy, overshadowing the once-dominant role of UNESCO (Klees, 2012). The organization shapes education policy through its extensive research and strategy reports, which are reinforced by its substantial grant and loan funding and ensure countries conform to its policy preferences (Klees, 2012).

The World Bank has been heavily criticized for its approach to international development. In particular, the organization has been criticized for possessing a neoliberal ideology which disadvantages Global South countries. Girvan (2007) argues that the Bank's centralized control over development research, coupled with its biased knowledge generation, hampers the knowledge-generating capacities of developing countries. Meanwhile, Klees (2012) asserts that:

> The World Bank prides itself on being evidence- and research-based, but it is not. Its premises and conclusions are based on ideology, not evidence. The World Bank selects and interprets the research that fits with its ideology… What development means and how best to achieve it is widely contested, yet what we get from the World Bank is not a fair look at the evidence and debate but a continued commitment to a particular development ideology.

The World Bank's limited efforts to build institutions within developing countries, thereby enabling independent thinking, have also been questioned (Girvan, 2007). Centralized research control within the Bank is seen as a subtle means of setting the policy agenda to

serve the interests of the Bank's Northern sponsors (Girvan, 2007). More than anything, the World Bank is concerned with economic growth. Klees (2012) argues that the "World Bank has been very pleased with a spate of studies that support the argument that education contributes to GNP [Gross National Product]…The World Bank especially likes the newer versions, which argue that it is less the quantity of schooling and more the quality of schooling, as measured by test scores, that result in GNP growth."

At present, WBG Education is focused on topics which include girls' education, the digitalization of education, early childhood development, and conflict education, amongst others. Through the reports and research the organization generates, WBG Education shapes education policy. Their influence over education policy is backed by their financial resources to fund projects as they see fit. For these reasons, I have chosen to include the WBG's Education division in my research.

D. Sample Size

This research examines a comprehensive dataset comprising 133 events conducted by three organizations during the period from 2019 to 2021. This includes a total of 14 events organized or co-organized by UNESCO-IBE, a total of 77 events organized or co-organized by the OECD Education and Skills division, and a total of 42 events organized or co-organized by the WBG's Education division. Throughout these 133 events, a total of 898 individuals took part. Notably, this count excludes representatives from the organizing and co-organizing entities, ensuring a more accurate assessment of the representation of participants. Including representatives from the organizing and co-organizing entities, the total number of participants amounts to over 1,400 individuals over the course of the 133 events observed. This means that, beyond recording event data, I also conducted background research into at least 1,400 individuals to determine the institutions they represented at the given time when an event was held.

V. Results

In this section, I will begin by presenting the individual results of each organization according to their total number of events, total number of participants, total number of Global South participants, and the share of Global South representation as a percentage of total participants at events held for each year between 2019 and 2021. I will also present data concerning the linguistic diversity of events and event formats utilized for each organization in each year. Then, I will compare the results from each organization over the time period selected.

A. UNESCO-IBE

The first organization which I included as part of this research was UNESCO-IBE. In 2019, the organization held a total of three events which included 55 participants. Of these 55 participants, a total of 16 individuals represented Southern institutions amounting to an overall share of 29% of total participants. All events in this year were held in-person and in English.

Figure 1: UNESCO-IBE: Global South countries represented at development conferences in 2019
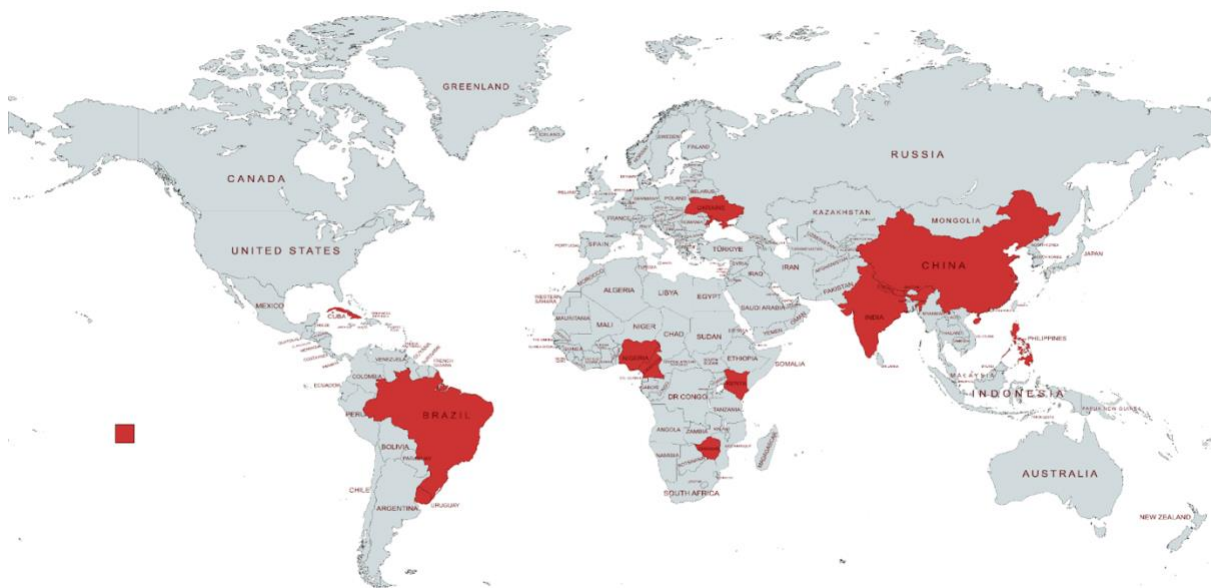
(Source: Self-elaborated)

Figure 1 above shows the Global South countries represented by individuals who participated in UNESCO-IBE events in 2019. A total of 12 countries were represented by 16 individuals from Southern institutions. The map shows representation from a diverse number of regions, including the Caribbean, South America, the Sahel, East Africa, Southern Africa, Eastern Europe, East Asia, South Asia, and Southeastern Asia. Notably, there was a lack of representation in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Pacific region.

In 2020, UNESCO-IBE again held a total of three events which included 27 participants. A total of 17 individuals represented Southern institutions amounting to an overall share of 63% of total participants.[1] During this year, all events were held virtually and a total of four languages were used across these events.

Figure 2: UNESCO-IBE: Global South countries represented at development conferences in 2020

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[1] Note: Data anomaly. Please refer to subsection E of this section titled "Data anomalies" for further explanation.

(Source: Self-elaborated)

Figure 2 above shows the Global South countries represented by individuals who participated in UNESCO-IBE events in 2020. A total of 17 individuals from Southern institutions represented 12 countries. The majority of countries represented were African countries. Other regions represented include South America, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia. There was no representation of the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, or the Pacific region. The continents of Asia and South America were represented by individuals from institutions in only one country on each continent, similar to the Caribbean.

In 2021, UNESCO-IBE held more events. A total of eight events took place this year and included 176 total participants. There were 97 individuals representing Southern institutions amounting to an overall share of 55% of total participants. During this year, all events were held either virtually or in a hybrid format. At least four languages were used across all events.

Figure 3: UNESCO-IBE: Global South countries represented at development conferences in 2021

(Source: Self-elaborated)

Figure 3 above shows the Global South countries represented by individuals who participated in UNESCO-IBE events in 2021. A total of 97 individuals from Southern institutions represented 29 countries. The distribution of representation was greater than previous years. Most all regions of the world were represented in 2021 except for the Caribbean, Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific region.

B. OECD Education and Skills

The next organization in this research was OECD's Education and Skills division. In 2019, the organization held a total of 19 events which included at least 313 participants. Of these 313 participants, a total of at least 31 individuals represented Southern institutions amounting to an overall share of 10% of total participants.[2] All events in this year were in English and included a mixture of in-person, virtual, and hybrid format events.

Figure 4: OECD Education and Skills: Global South countries represented at development conferences in 2019

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[2] Note: Data anomaly. Please refer to subsection E of this section titled "Data anomalies" for further explanation.

(Source: Self-elaborated)

Figure 4 above shows the Global South countries represented by individuals who participated in OECD Education and Skills division events in 2019. Southern institutions were represented by a total of 31 individuals from four countries. Except for Russia and South Africa, the Southern countries represented were primarily BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) alliance countries which comprise the largest economies in each region. There was no representation from any region of Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Europe, or the Pacific.

The OECD Education and Skills division held more events in 2020 for a total of 27. The total number of participants in these events was 44 of which 7 individuals represented Southern institutions. The overall share of participants from Global South countries again equaled 16% of total participants. All events in this year were in English and were conducted virtually.

Figure 5: OECD Education and Skills: Global South countries represented at development conferences in 2020

(Source: Self-elaborated)

Figure 5 above shows the Global South countries represented by individuals who participated in OECD Education and Skills division events in 2020. Southern institutions were represented by a total of 7 individuals from three countries– Tanzania, Egypt, and Brazil. Representation of Global South countries was particularly low this year and lacking in diversity of representation, as well.

In 2021, the organization held the most events for a total of 31. The total number of participants in these events was 73 of which 7 individuals represented Southern institutions. Only 10% of total participants represented Global South institutions, the lowest in all three years observed. Apart from one event which was held in French, all other events were held in English. All events were held online in 2021.

Figure 6: OECD Education and Skills: Global South countries represented at development conferences in 2021

(Source: Self-elaborated)

Figure 6 above shows the Global South countries represented by individuals who participated in OECD Education and Skills division events in 2021. A total of 7 individuals represented Southern institutions in five countries. Most Southern institutions represented were Asian. There was no representation from Latin America, the Middle East, Europe, or the Pacific, whereas only one country from Africa was represented.

C. WBG Education

The World Bank Group's Education division was the final organization I included in this research. In 2019, WBG Education held a total of 9 events which included 39 participants. A total of 19 participants represented Southern institutions. The overall share of participants from Global South institutions was 49% of total participants. All events were held in English in 2019 and were either in-person or hybrid format events.

Figure 7: WBG Education: Global South countries represented at development conferences in 2019

(Source: Self-elaborated)

Figure 7 above shows the Global South countries represented by individuals who participated in OECD Education and Skills division events in 2021. A total of 19 individuals represented Southern institutions in 16 countries. There was a highly diverse number of countries represented relative to the number of individuals from Global South institutions. The greatest representation came from Africa. There was also representation of Southern countries in South Asia, South America, Southern Europe, and the Middle East. However, there was a lack of representation from the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and the Pacific region.

In 2020, WBG Education held a total of 10 events with a total of 22 participants. In this year, only one participant represented a Global South institution, thus the share of participants from Global South institutions was just 5% of total participants. All events were held in English in 2020 and consisted of a mixture of in-person, virtual, and hybrid format events.

Figure 8: WBG Education: Global South countries represented at development conferences in 2020
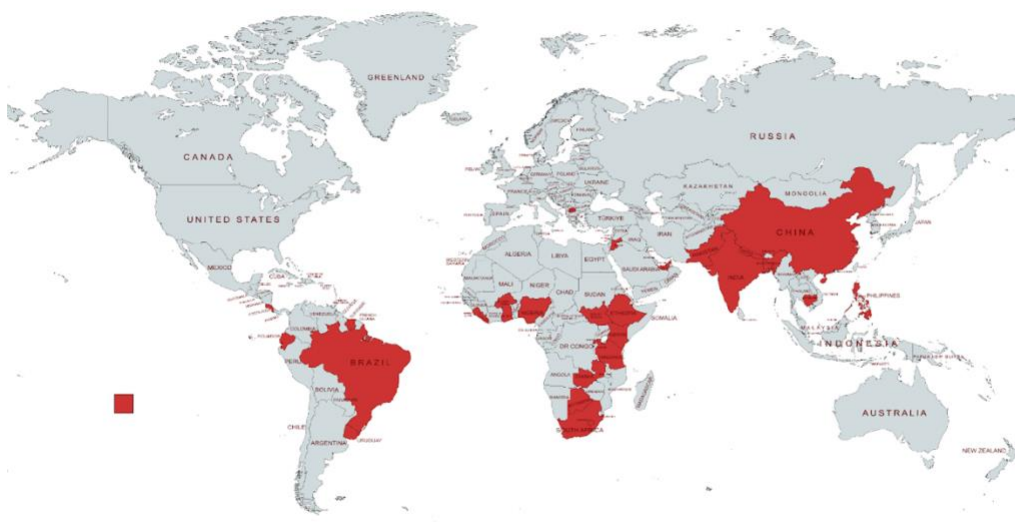

(Source: Self-elaborated)

Figure 8 above shows the Global South countries represented by individuals who participated in WBG Education events in 2020. Only one participant represented a Global South country. Syria was the only country represented. Global South representation was extremely low at all events this year.

In 2021, WBG Education held a total of 23 events with a total of 149 participants. A total of 52 participants represented Global South institutions. The share of Southern participants was 35% of total participants. A total of seven languages were used across all events, and all events took place online. This was the largest number of languages represented in events held by any organization in a given year.

Figure 9: WBG Education: Global South countries represented at development conferences in 2021

(Source: Self-elaborated)

Figure 9 above shows the Global South countries represented by individuals who participated in WBG Education events in 2021. A total of 52 individuals represented 30 institutions based in the Global South. In comparison to the year before, the representation of Global South institutions increased significantly. Previously, Syria was the only Global South country represented. In 2021, representation was diversified to represent most all regions of the globe, except for Central Asia, North Africa, and the Pacific.

D. A comparative look at Global South representation across events held by UNESCO-IBE, OECD Education and Skills, and WBG Education between 2019 and 2021

The previous subsections have provided an overview of the findings concerning the representation of the Global South in events organized or co-organized by UNESCO-IBE, the OECD Education and Skills division, and WBG Education from 2019 to 2021. Building upon these individual analyses, this section compares the outcomes of Global South representation across each organization.

Table 1: Results

Organization	Year	Number of Events	Number of Participants	Number of participants from the Global South	Share of Global South Participants (% of total participants)
IBE-UNESCO	2019	3	55	16	29
	2020	3	27	17	63
	2021	8	176	97	55
Total IBE-UNESCO		14	258	130	50
OECD	2019	19	313	31	10
	2020	27	44	7	16
	2021	31	73	7	10
Total OECD		77	430	45	10
World Bank	2019	9	39	19	49
	2020	10	22	1	5
	2021	23	149	52	35
Total World Bank		42	210	72	34
Total		133	898	247	28

(Source: Self-elaborated)

Table 1 above presents the number of events, number of participants, the number of participants from Global South institutions, and the share of participants from Global South institutions as a percentage of total participants at a given event respective to each organization for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021. The details of these results have been provided in the previous three subsections. In this table, I have also calculated the total number of participants, the number of participants from Global South institutions, and the share of participants from Global South institutions as a percentage of total participants respective to each organization for the period of 2019-2021. The total numbers provide a general overview of Global South representation in events at each organization over time. In the last row of the table, I present the total number of events, number of participants, the

number of participants from Global South institutions, and the share of participants from Global South institutions as a percentage of total participants at a given event for each organization for the period 2019-2021. Capturing this data provides insight into overall representation of the Global South in events held by leading organizations working in the field of education development.

Referring to Table 1, UNESCO-IBE, referred to as IBE-UNESCO in the table, held a total of 14 events between 2019 and 2021. A total of 258 individuals participated in these events, excluding representatives from UNESCO-IBE. There were 130 individuals from Global South institutions represented in these events which comprised 50% of total participants. The OECD Education and Skills division held a total of 77 events between 2019 and 2021 wherein 430 individuals participated. Only 45 participants or 10% of the total participants came from a Global South institution. Between 2019 and 2021, WBG Education held a total of 42 events. A total of 210 individuals participated, 72 of which were from a Global South institution. A total of 34% of the total participants at events held between these years represented the Global South.

Based on these results, UNESCO-IBE were most inclusive of the Global South in their events out of the three organizations. The ratio of Global South to Global North participants was equal in events held by UNESCO-IBE. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that UNESCO-IBE also held the least number of events of the three organizations portrayed in the data. As there may have been more events that were not accounted for in the data collection due to a lack of access to information, the number of Global South countries could be higher or lower. In section four, I discuss in detail the limitations of this research.

Of all three organizations, the OECD Education and Skills division held the most events but had the lowest participation rate of scholars from the Global South. Between 2019 and 2021, Global South representation was consistently between 10-20% of total participants. When compared to UNESCO-IBE and WBG Education, this was significantly lower.

The World Bank Group's Education division held more events over time and significantly increased their overall participation from 2019 to 2021. In the year 2019 and the year 2021, the organization had a relatively high participation rate from the Global South, especially when compared with the OECD. However, in 2020, the total number of participants was low compared to other years, and only one individual from the Global South was represented in the events that took place during this year.

Again looking at Table 1, UNESCO-IBE, the OECD Education and Skills division, and WBG Education held a collective total of 133 events between 2019 and 2021. These events featured a total of 898 participants of which 247 represented a Global South institution. The overall share of Global South participants across events held by all three organizations between 2019 and 2021 totaled 28% of total participants.

E. Data anomalies

The results of this research may be slightly skewed due to two data anomalies present in data for UNESCO-IBE in the year 2021 and OECD Education and Skills division in 2019. Table 2 below shows the results of this research excluding these data anomalies.

Table 2: Results (excluding data anomalies)

Organization	Year	Number of Events	Number of Participants	Number of participants from the Global South	Share of Global South Participants (% of total participants)
IBE-UNESCO	2019	3	55	16	29
	2020	3	27	17	63
	2021	7	48	36	75
Total IBE-UNESCO		13	130	72	55
OECD	2019	18	13	1	8
	2020	27	44	7	16
	2021	31	73	7	10
Total OECD		76	130	15	12
World Bank	2019	9	39	19	49
	2020	10	22	1	5
	2021	23	149	52	35
Total World Bank		42	210	72	34
Total		131	470	156	33

(Source: Self-elaborated)

The data for UNESCO-IBE in the year 2021 was skewed by the 4th World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) symposium which was co-hosted by the organization. The symposium took place in November 2021 on the topics of value-based education and emotional learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It convened at least 128 speakers who represented at least 67 Global South countries. If the symposium were excluded from the data, referring to Table 2 above, UNESCO-IBE held a total of 7 events wherein 130 individuals participated. Among these 130 participants, 72 represented a Global South institution which is equivalent to a share of 55% of the total participants. Excluding the WCCES symposium, Global South participants were better represented than Global North participants in UNESCO-IBE events between 2019 and 2021. UNESCO-IBE would be the only organization observed in this research where this phenomenon holds true.

Another anomaly in the data occurred in 2019 for the OECD Education and Skills division. In December of that year, the first Forum for World Education (FWE) on the future of global education was held in partnership with the FWE non-profit organization who are "committed to promoting global economic growth through educational innovation and helping disadvantaged groups gain access and equality" (OECD, 2019). The two-day conference brought together over 300 individuals from more than 10 countries, at least three of which were Global South countries based on the information available in the conference press release (OECD, 2019). Nonetheless, it is important to point out that at least two of the three individuals who represented the Global South in this conference are billionaires Jack Ma of China and Dhanin Chearavanont of Thailand. If the FWE forum were to be excluded from the data, referring to Table 2, the OECD Education and Skills division held a total of 76 events wherein 130 individuals participated. Among these 130 participants, 15 came from the Global South. Thus, the total share of Global South participants would be 12% of the total participants, which is 2% higher than the share depicted in Table 1.

Despite data anomalies, I have chosen to analyze my data according to Table 1 which includes these anomalies. As this research attempts to provide a holistic understanding of the Global South in events, I have chosen to analyze the data which includes all events which were organized or co-organized by the three organization I selected for this study.

VI.   Discussion

In this section, I analyze the results of this research from section V. Nuancing my results by considering the governing structures of each organization represented, this section aims to provide better insight into each organization as a whole.

A. Governance

To offer another dimension to my research, I also investigated the governance of each organization to determine if its composition aligned with my findings. My assumption was that greater diversity in the governing structure would correspond to a more diverse participant composition in the events.

UNESCO-IBE is governed by a council known as the IBE Council. This council serves as the governing body and comprises 12 representatives appointed during UNESCO's General Conference, with each member state serving a four-year term (UNESCO-IBE, 2015). While council members are eligible for re-election, they can hold office for a maximum of two consecutive terms, provided their respective member states' terms are renewed by the General Conference (UNESCO-IBE, 2015). From 2019 to 2021, it appeared that UNESCO-IBE maintained the same council members. These members represented a total of 11 countries, including Switzerland, Slovenia, Qatar, Portugal, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Ecuador, China, Armenia, Angola, and South Africa. Between 2019 and 2021, UNESCO-IBE was directed by two Global South representatives, Mmantsetsa Marope and Yao Ydo. The majority of UNESCO-IBE's council members were from the Global South, with only three out of eight countries represented belonging to the Global North.

The OECD Education and Skills division is governed by the OECD Council as opposed to a board of directors. The OECD Council serves as the primary decision-making body of the organization, comprising ambassadors from member countries, the European Commission, and chaired by the Secretary-General (OECD, 2022). The OECD Education and Skills division is a directorate of the OECD which is overseen by four entities who are responsible for the oversight and implementation of activities within the framework of the OECD Council's governance (OECD, 2022). These bodies are the Education Policy Committee, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation Governing Board (CERI), the PISA Governing Board, and the TALIS Governing Board. Between 2019 and 2021, German national Andreas Schleicher served as the Director of the Education and Skills division. Meanwhile, the Education Policy Committee was chaired by a US national, the CERI was headed by a French national, the PISA Governing Board was chaired by an Australian national, and the TALIS Governing Board was chaired by a Portuguese national. The Global South is not represented by any individual who oversees the OECD Education and Skills division.

The WBG Education division functions as a unit of the World Bank. The organization is directed by Peruvian national Jaime Saavedra and is represented by a governing body known as the Board of Governors, who serve as the ultimate decision-makers within the World Bank (World Bank, 2023). Typically, the Board of Governors comprises the finance ministers or development ministers of the member countries. Each of the World Bank's 189 member countries appoint one Governor and one alternate Governor, however the organization's 25 executive directors hold the majority of the decision-making (Britannica, 2023). Five nations, namely the United States, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France, have the authority to select their own executive directors, whereas the 184 remaining countries are grouped into regions, and each region elects a single executive director. The chairman of the bank has always been a US citizen throughout its existence. Whereas the

director of WBG Education represents a country from the Global South, the ultimate decision-making power within the bank is held by representatives of the Global North. Thus, Global South representation within the governance structure of the WBG Education is low.

In my research, I found that UNESCO-IBE was the most inclusive of the Global South of the three organizations observed. This aligns with the composition of UNESCO-IBE's governing body, wherein five out of eight members represented a Global South country, as well as the organization's directors who represent Global South countries. The OECD Education and Skills division was the least inclusive of the Global South in its events held between 2019 and 2021. The individuals who oversee the organization are all representatives of Global North countries, thus coinciding with its low representation of the Global South in events. The WBG Education was more representative than the OECD Education and Skills division but less representative than UNESCO-IBE of the Global South in events. While decision-making power at WBG Education is primarily in the hands of representatives of Global North countries, the organization is directed by a Peruvian national. Thus, it is not very inclusive of the Global South in its governance structure, mostly aligns with the results of my research concerning the WBG Education's division.

B. Analysis

The results of this research showed that UNESCO-IBE was the most inclusive of the Global South in their events out of the three organizations. Additionally, UNESCO-IBE exhibited a strong inclination for collaboration with other organizations, perhaps signaling an understanding of the significance of partnerships, particularly with Southern institutions, in achieving development goals (Konttinen et al., 2014). UNESCO-IBE also stood out by offering their events in multiple languages, which reflects their advocacy for linguistic accessibility and inclusiveness in education (UNESCO-IBE, 2023). Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that UNESCO-IBE also held the least number of events out of the three organizations. This could be a result of a lack of access to information during the data collection process. On the other hand, it could be explained by a lack of resources available at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as, after all, the organization did increase the number of events it held in 2021. It may also be unfair to compare UNESCO's IBE branch to the OECD Education and Skills division and WBG Education in this regard, seeing as the latter two are considerably larger.

The OECD Education and Skills division was the least inclusive of scholars from the Global South, despite having held the most events out of the three organizations. Considering that the OECD operates primarily on behalf of wealthy Northern countries, this could explain the reason why there was a lack of representation of Global South individuals in events. Nonetheless, several of OECD event topics were meant to address "international" or "global" challenges in education, such as their event titled "The state of education around the world: Findings from Education at a Glance 2021," which featured a total of zero representatives from the Global South. The OECD Education and Skills division also held nearly all of its events in English, whereas both English and French are considered official languages within the organization (OECD, 2022). English used as a lingua franca in events in OECD is likely due to the linguistic diversity of the organization's member states, however it is important to keep in mind the hegemonic role of the English language in academia and research and the many languages represented by the organization's members.

Over the course of the years between 2019 and 2021, the WBG's Education division held more events over time and increased their overall participation rate in events. The organization also had a higher participation rate of Global South scholars relative to total participants than the OECD Education and Skills division but less than UNESCO-IBE.

Considering that the World Bank presents itself as a collective which is representative of all 189 member countries, it would have made sense if the organization was the most inclusive of the Global South (World Bank, 2023). Santos (2016) critiques the World Bank for presenting itself under the guise of "univeralism" and describes its activities as a form of "hegemonic globalization," whereby "the force of an idea that asserts itself by the very idea of force, that is to say, by such imperatives of the free market as rating agencies, conditionalities… delocalization of businesses, land grabbing, sweatshops throughout the global South, and so on." On the other hand, the WBG Education division was the most linguistically inclusive of any organization, offering interpretation into a total of seven languages in its events. However, it is important to note that this linguistic inclusivity is new, as in the years 2019 and 2020, all of the organization's events were held in English. In 2021, the organization provided interpretation into an additional six languages over the course of its events, potentially signaling efforts to make events more accessible to a larger population.

As a collective, the three organizations in this study held a total of 133 events between 2019 and 2021. Ultimately, the percentage of Global South participation in these events was 28% of total participants, equivalent to around 1 in 4 speakers. This is quite low when considering that UNESCO-IBE, the OECD Education and Skills division, and WBG Education are global leaders in international education policy. All three organizations are heavily engaged in programs based in the Global South, yet as a collective, more work is left to be done to amplify the voices of the historically marginalized South.

VII.   Limitations

During the course of my research, I faced certain limitations. As previously discussed, I had initially planned to focus on international organizations headquartered in Geneva working in the field of education development. However, due to limited data availability for events held between 2019 and 2021 for Geneva-based organizations, I needed to expand my research scope. Thus, I broadened my focus to include three global organizations working on international education development with diverse objectives and regional focuses. Each organization also varied in size and scope of their work. By expanding my research, I was able to capture a broader picture of events and offer a more diversified picture of Global South representation in international education.

Despite expanding my research to include large organizations working in education, I still faced challenges while searching for events. For instance, while using the UNESCO-IBE website's search feature to access resources and previous year's events through filtering, I repeatedly encountered an error message stating "No results found," regardless of the year I specified, as depicted in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: UNESCO-IBE search results
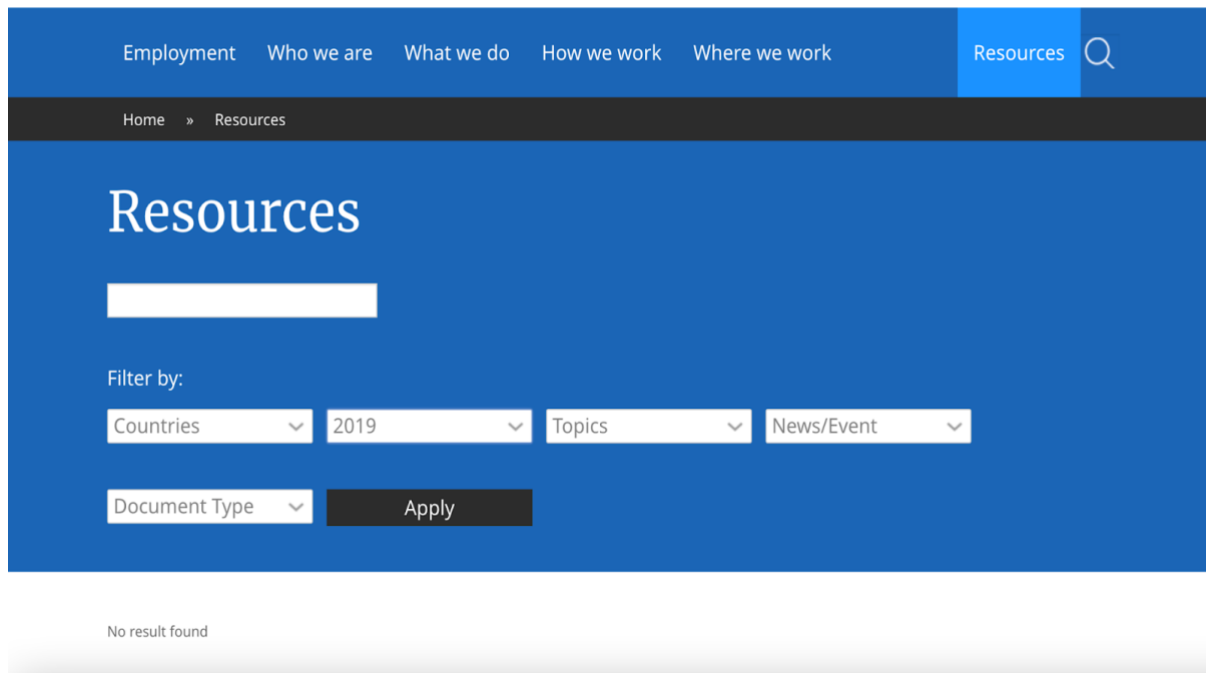
(Source: Screen capture of UNESCO-IBE resources webpage available at
https://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/resources)

Due to this constraint, I heavily depended on social media platforms such as
Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to carry out my investigation on UNESCO-IBE events
spanning from 2019 to 2021. Consequently, it is important to note that my dataset may not
encompass all the events organized by UNESCO-IBE over the course of this timeframe, as I
could not verify the total number of events the organization hosted directly through their
website.

Another challenge I encountered during my research was accessing event data. During
several instances, I encountered broken or expired links to events, which impeded my ability
to gather comprehensive data for certain events. As illustrated in Figure 11 below, I would
frequently be redirected to web pages that were inaccessible or not functioning properly.

Figure 11: Webinar not available

Webinar Not Available

This webinar or its recording was removed. Please contact the organizer for more information.

(Source: Screen capture)

In the case that I was directed to a broken or expired link, I would perform a Google search of an event, including the date of the event. In most cases, I would then be able to find the event I was searching for, often through a social media post or through an article or news item published by a co-organizer of an event. In other cases, a link would direct me to a website that had been taken over by another organization. For example, while attempting to find information pertaining to the OECD Education and Skills division's 2019 Education Fast Forward (EFF) event, I was taken to the webpage www.effdebate.org which has since been claimed by another organization. On the rare occasion that I was not able to find information about an event which did not also include a participant list, I included the event in an organization's overall event count but excluded other variables including total participant count, total participant count from the Global South, and share of participants from the Global South as a percentage of total participants.

Another limitation I faced was a result of my methodology. In my methodology, I stated that I considered a participant representative of the Global South if they represented an institution based in the Global South at the time of an event. While I consider this methodology a better approach to identifying a scholar from the Global South than attempting to ascertain the nationality of a participant, it was nonetheless flawed. For example, in several instances, I came across individuals who represented Global North institutions but were originally from a Global South country and represented their region in their position at a given Global North institution. Less often, I encountered individuals who represented Global South institutions but came from Global North countries, completed their studies in the Global North, and worked for Global North-based institutions before acquiring their current position in a Global South institution. Despite evident flaws in my methodology, I maintained it throughout the data collection process. A better way to assess whether a participant is from the Global South would simply be to ask them directly. However, due to time and resource constraints, I was not able to perform this level of in-depth research.

VIII.   Conclusions

This research has attempted to provide insight into the underrepresentation of scholars from the Global South within international organizations focused on education development. Previous research has highlighted the lack of Southern scholars in research and academia (See: Amarante et al., 2021; Graham et al., 2011; Cummings & Hoebink, 2017; Graham et al., 2011; Das et al., 2013) and in the field of international development wherein most work on development occurs in the Global South (See: Amarante et al., 2021; Chelwa, 2019). This research has prompted further investigation into Global South representation in development at other levels. Research undertaken by Amarante et al. (2021) revealed that the South is not only underrepresented in research and academia on development, but also in development conferences, which serve as highly influential spaces of knowledge exchange, often shaping policy-making. This also reigns true of the field of education development which has excluded and marginalized scholars from the Global South (Smith & Sargent, 2022). A legacy of colonialism, Global North countries have positioned themselves as the global producers of knowledge and dominate global education as the "developed" West aiding the "developing" rest (Kothari, 2005). While previous research has examined the representation of the Global South in development conferences and in education, there is no such research on the participation of the Global South in education development conferences or events.

In this study, I conducted research into events held between 2019 and 2021 by three prominent international organizations working on education: UNESCO-IBE, the Education and Skills division of the OECD, and the Education division of the WBG. For each event, I recorded the total number of event participants and the total number of participants representing Global South-based institutions. I observed that Global South participation in all events was 28% of total participants, or approximately representative of 1 in 4 speakers. Considering the influential role of UNESCO-IBE, the OECD Education and Skills division, and WBG Education in shaping international education policy, this figure is low. Concerted efforts by each organization are required to amplify the voices and contributions of Southern scholars in education.

A.   Recommendations

To address the aforementioned challenges and promote equity in the field of education development, I recommend the following:

1. Recognizing that UNESCO holds a unique position in the realm of education policy influence as an international organization (IO), UNESCO sets itself apart from the economically focused World Bank and OECD (Schultz & Vicko, 2021). According to Schultz & Vicko (2021), UNESCO serves as a platform for local knowledge and actors through its national offices and programming. Simultaneously, it plays a global role in shaping education policies, working in harmony with other IOs to influence national and local education provisions. Within UNESCO, the IBE occupies its own unique position, particularly in the domains of curriculum design and multilingual education. By continuing to emphasize the participation of individuals from the Global South in events, UNESCO-IBE has the potential to further dismantle educational barriers and promote inclusivity in the field.

2. While the primary focus of the OECD Education and Skills division lies in the economic concerns of the countries in the Global North, it is nonetheless crucial that the organization prioritize enhancing the representation of the Global South in its activities. Given that the OECD Education and Skills division also carries out various programs in the Global South, it is essential to

actively engage stakeholders from these regions in decision-making processes and policy discussions in spaces like development conferences.

3. The WBG's Education division serves as the largest source of financing for developing countries, thus their potential to influence policy making in education has the greatest potential to shape education policy among the organizations included in this study. For this reason, it is crucial that the organization actively work to promote policies which include and amplify the voices of Southern scholars. More, the WBG's Education division should continue to enhance its representation of Global South scholars in its events, as it did between the years 2019 and 2021.

4. During the COVID-19 pandemic, conferences shifted from in-person events to virtual events. This shift presented an opportunity to overcome barriers of accessibility, thus highlighting the importance of ongoing provision of online connectivity options by each organization. By doing so, "global access to knowledge will increase substantially during and after meetings, enabling greater democratisation of science, and equalising differences between researchers of diverse means and backgrounds" (Sarabipour et al., 2021).

5. International organizations should continue to challenge the linguistic hegemony of English in events, as linguistic diversity in international conferences is a fundamental means of promoting inclusivity and accessibility to information for all participants.

Ultimately, UNESCO-IBE, the OECD Education and Skills division, and WBG Education "are situated in a privileged position, endowed with policy influence" (Schultz & Vicko, 2021). The OECD, as highlighted by Schultz & Vicko (2021), has been a pioneer in compiling comparative data on education performance since the 1960s, and the launch of PISA has allowed them "to occupy a position of power, providing a tool of governance by comparison on a grand scale." Similarly, UNESCO-IBE has played a significant role in setting global education policy through its diverse range of activities, including knowledge production and advocacy efforts (UNESCO-IBE, 2023). The WBG's Education division has demonstrated its influence by actively engaging in the integration and coordination of education policies at the national level, emphasizing the importance of private-sector involvement in education (Schultz & Vicko, 2021). Given the significance of these organizations in shaping education policy, it is essential they leverage their positions of power to enhance Global South representation in education and actively challenge the persisting North-South binary in development.

Note: In future research, it would be interesting to expand the timeframe and number of organizations included in this study to provide a better picture of representation of the Global South in development conferences on education.

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