GEOGRAPHIC INEQUALITY IN MANAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP: DATA-DRIVEN ESTIMATES AND TRENDS

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ABSTRACT

Top management scholarship struggles to be globally relevant as it fails to reflect the diversity of global business phenomena. While this issue is informally recognized, the field lacks systematic estimates that detail the level (and trend) of geographic bias favoring the West. Using unique data from over 21,000 articles in six leading management journals, we find that only 3% of authors and 15% of study regions come from mid- or low-income countries. Worryingly, these trends are not improving much over time. Our findings raise serious questions about the extent to which management scholarship truly represents the global business landscape.

Keywords: Geographic bias; global management; management scholarship; science of science; WEIRD Bias

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INTRODUCTION

Social science enables evidence-based practice for a broad range of economic and social phenomena (Cole et al., 2020). Scholarship in the field of management, for example, increasingly makes practical recommendations to both private and public sector actors (Nembhard et al., 2009; Nishii, 2013; Whitley, 1984; Wickert & de Bakker, 2018). Given the potentially high stakes of management research, it is therefore concerning that some regions around the world might be severely overrepresented, as many researchers suspect. Without a solid base of locally relevant social-scientific evidence, policy-making in the non-Western world could remain evidence-free, which would create a key impediment to closing the development gap between high and low-income regions of the world (Yamey & Volmink, 2014).

Despite informal awareness surrounding these facts, we currently lack systematic evidence of geographic inequality embedded in management research. Wickert et al. (2024) call on management scholars to embrace more non-Western contexts in their research and, in doing so, to unleash the explanatory potential of these contexts. However, we know little about the magnitude of such geographic inequality in management and how these levels have been changing over time. A major barrier has been the lack of systematic meta-data linking papers to the geographic location of their authors and the geographic focus of the study. Given the sundry challenges, existing analyses of geographic bias tend to produce estimates only for a few issues of single journals or a limited number of time periods (Baruch, 2001; Murphy & Zhu, 2012; Pitesa & Gelfand, 2022).

To overcome these challenges, we develop a novel machine-learning-based method that can systematically enable rigorous meta-science in a wide range of journals and over many time periods. The heart of this method leverages geoparsing, a Natural Language Processing (NLP) technique that locates specific geographies from text, to measure two dimensions of geographic bias: (1) the frequency of geographic locations studied and (2) the frequency of the author's physical locations. We start by scraping data from the official websites of six top journals we focus on. We supplement this with institutional affiliation data from Dimensions, a research platform developed by Digital Science that has strong coverage dating back to the 1950s. We then clean, standardize, and geo-parse the data to match papers with the locations. Altogether, this enables us to look at long-term trends in the inequality of top management scholarship over the past seven decades.

Our analysis yields three main findings. First, among articles with a geographic focus, over 58% tend to focus exclusively on the United States (US), while only about 15% have at least a part of their focus on mid- or low-income countries, a trend that has been stable since the 1970s. Second, a similar inequality is seen in the geography of the author's locations. Over the full sample period, 67% of publications feature an entirely US-based team. Across all articles, over 74% of researchers are affiliated with the US. Notably, there has been a steady rise in representation from researchers in non-US high-income countries, reaching 30% as of 2022. However, the rise in researchers in mid- or low-income countries (including those in India and China) is minimal and only started in the recent decade.

Finally, there is concordance between the study region and the authors' home regions. US researchers primarily study the US and other high-income countries, while researchers in other high-income countries mainly study their home countries and the US Such matching accounts for more than 80% of all publications. Altogether, these findings paint a worrying picture of the state of geographic representation in top management scholarship and the lack of meaningful progress in the last few decades.

This study makes several contributions. First, we contribute to the growing literature on the "colonization" of management (Banerjee, 2021; Bruton et al., 2022; Filatotchev et al., 2022; Jammulamadaka et al., 2021). While prior work has scrutinized the Western-centric nature of management theory, we are the first to provide broad quantitative estimates covering key top management scholarship since its inception. Second, we contribute to the broader literature on the WEIRD bias across the social sciences (Arnett, 2008; Linxen et al., 2021; Wilson & Knutsen, 2022) by extending these methods and ideas to the field of management research. Our contribution is also to introduce the idea of geographic inequality in the focus of study beyond simply the author's location or the nationality of experimental subjects. Third, we contribute to the nascent literature in the science of science and innovation more broadly on inferring geographic entities from publication texts (Nagaraj et al., 2020; Wilson, 2017; Wilson & Knutsen, 2022) and systematically relating authors' physical locations to regions studied (Briggs & Weathers, 2016). Here, we contribute a new machine-learning-based methodology and hope to make publicly available an open-source database to enable further meta-science on geographic inequality in social science research.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows: The next section provides background on measuring geographic inequality across the social sciences. The data and method section describes how the data are collected and processed and the methods used to conduct the analysis. The result section reports several stylized facts concerning the geographic distribution of management scholars and the regions they study. The final section concludes.

BACKGROUND

The social and behavioral sciences aim to uncover fundamental insights about the underlying drivers of human and organizational actions, as well as to distill these insights into practical strategies to shape behavior (Whitley, 1984; Zand & Sorensen, 1975). Yet, across its many sub-fields, scientists are often confronted with the vast diversity of human behavior, organizational systems, and phenomena (Earley, 2006; Haire et al., 1966; Rosenzweig & Singh, 1991). Ideally, social scientists should strive to make sense of this diversity and collectively chart out a complete map of human experience (Black et al., 1991; Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991; Doktor et al., 1991). In practice, however, there are large gaps in our scholarship, which are oftentimes systematically related to culture and geography.

In particular, existing theories, models, and concepts rely heavily on samples that are WEIRD: Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic

(Henrich et al., 2010), which are rarely representative of the diversity seen across the world. As a result, scholars warn that mainstream social science has implicitly treated Western theories as universal while overlooking important differences in other settings (Bruton et al., 2022; Doktor et al., 1991; Usunier, 1998). This can be especially problematic when these theories are subsequently applied to non-Western contexts, where existing findings may not apply (Tiokhin et al., 2019). It could also mean that research questions of particular relevance to non-WEIRD geographies (e.g., the one-child policy in China, apartheid in South Africa, and the caste system in India) are not sufficiently covered by mainstream scholarship (Bruton et al., 2022; George et al., 2016). Closely tied to this issue is the fact that researchers themselves are often deeply WEIRD (Baruch, 2001; Meadon & Spurrett, 2010). Not only does this mean they are less likely to focus on non-WEIRD subjects (Meadon & Spurrett, 2010; Nagaraj et al., 2020), but also that the social sciences are drawing from a limited talent pool and being deprived of the benefits of diversity and openness (Clancy & Davis, 2019; Hong & Page, 2004; Lakhani et al., 2007). All of this has led to growing calls to "decolonize" the social sciences (Banerjee, 2021; Clancy & Davis, 2019; Murphy & Zhu, 2012).

In the context of management research, this could lead researchers to miss noteworthy organizational phenomena from understudied regions, such as Chinese family firms navigating succession planning amid the absence of any sibling rivalry due to the One Child Policy (Li & Piezunka, 2019). Alternatively, it may cause researchers to overlook regional contingencies to general theories calibrated in Western contexts, for instance, why firms engage in corporate venture capital (Dushnitsky & Yug, 2022). Perhaps most severely, the field may fail to see competing or contradictory evidence to hypotheses developed in the West, for instance, the negative relationship between resource availability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) observed in Sub-Sahara Africa but not in developed countries (Julian & Ofori-dankwa, 2013). In short, an overt focus on a handful of regions threatens to impoverish the field by leaving important (generalizable) insights on the table and by preventing the applicability of management research to large and important phenomena that are not observed in the West. This has led some of the most influential journals in the field (e.g., the *Academy of Management Journal*) to explicitly call for more research focusing on non-WEIRD contexts (George et al., 2016).

Besides the geographic focus of the study, there is an additional layer contributing to the geographic inequality of social science research: the researchers themselves (Meadon & Spurrett, 2010). While the community of management scholars is relatively global – with the Academy of Management's membership extending to 110 countries[1] – scholars who are able to publish in top journals generally hail from Western contexts. To be sure, these journals are themselves mostly located in the West. For example, the UT Dallas top journal list, widely regarded as the collection of flagship management journals, predominantly includes US journals (Harley & Fleming, 2021; Wei & Zhang, 2020). Nevertheless, these journals have global mandates and actively aspire for geographic representation in their scholarship base (Conlon, 2000). Furthermore, they have extensive international reach and are now factored into hiring and tenure decisions in business schools across

the world. For instance, many Chinese universities and the National Science Foundation of China have switched to the UT Dallas journal rankings (Chen et al., 2021). In other words, these influential journals set the tone for the management field globally. If they are indeed excluding large swaths of researchers, then they are potentially missing out on a critical lever to address the geographic inequality in their base of authors, especially in light of evidence that scientists from understudied regions tend to contribute novel insights from their local contexts (Nagaraj et al., 2020).

To address this problem, we need concrete measures of the degree of geographic bias in academic research. While there is a common impression that a geographic bias is widespread, many of the social sciences continue to lack empirical evidence that confirms its existence (Apicella et al., 2020). Of all the disciplines, the field of psychology has arguably made the most progress in identifying the scale of the problem (Linxen et al., 2021). A pioneering analysis of top journals across six psychology sub-disciplines from 2003 to 2007 revealed a significant geographical imbalance, with 68% of study subjects hailing from the United States and a staggering 96% from Western industrialized countries, including North America, Europe, Australia, and Israel (Arnett, 2008). Building on this work, Hendriks et al. (2019) investigate the global reach of positive psychology interventions (PPIs), sourcing data from 187 full-text articles and 188 RCTs across 24 countries between 1998 and 2017, and find that 78.2% of such trials were conducted in Western countries. Finally, Nielsen et al. (2017) meticulously reviewed 1,582 articles published between 2006 and 2010 in three leading psychology journals with high-impact factors, recording the geographical regions of participants and affiliations of authors. The results were striking, with 90.52% of studies involving participants from WEIRD countries and a mere 6.76% from non-WEIRD countries.

Other fields are also beginning to make inroads into measuring geographic bias, revealing similar disparities. In human-centered computing, for instance, Linxen et al. (2021) analyzed 3,269 articles from the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (2016–2020). Their results indicate that only 16% to 30% of studies included participants from non-Western countries. In political science, Wilson and Knutsen (2022) examine a database comprising titles and abstracts from 27,690 publications across eight prominent journals from 1906 to 2019: they find a 1.6:1 ratio of Western to non-Western country references. In conflict studies, Phillips and Greene (2020) review 4,171 articles from five prominent conflict journals between 1990 and 2015 and find that the United States is the most frequently mentioned country in abstracts. In economics, Das et al. (2013) analyze 76,046 economics papers published between 1985 and 2005 and estimate that papers focusing on the US are 2.5 percentage points more likely to be published in the top five journals. Ironically, even the field of geography is not immune to this phenomenon. Graham et al. (2014) look at Wikipedia articles that are "geotagged" and find these articles predominantly reference entities in North America. They find that 564,084 articles concern the United States, while only tens of thousands concern even some European countries, Japan, Australia, and India. Finally, and remarkably, this phenomenon even occurs

within the Global South. Looking at two top journals in African politics scholarship during the period 1993 to 2013, Briggs and Weathers (2016) find that former British colonies are far more studied, as are countries where English is the official language.

In contrast, the field of management research has largely not yet begun to scrutinize its geographic bias (Gelfand et al., 2008, 2017). In one early exception, Baruch (2001) studied the geographic origin of the authors of 1,948 articles in the top seven management journals and found minimal representation (20.1%) among authors outside of the North American zone; further, three Western countries (UK, Australia, and Israel) are responsible for over half of the scholarship outside of North America. While useful, the study only considers four discrete time periods, with the most recent sample year being 1995. As a result, it cannot speak to the current state of inequality nor its scope. In addition, the study does not shed any light on the concentration of the regions studied. More recently, Pitesa and Gelfand (2022) provided more context on focal areas by collecting data on a small sample of articles published in the journal *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes (OBHDP)*. Their findings indicate a significant bias toward WEIRD-context publications at 84.21% in 2010, which has since risen to 86.57% in 2020. However, the study is confined to only one journal and two time periods, which may not be representative of the field as a whole. Altogether, this underscores the need for a more comprehensive analysis of management scholarship that considers (1) a larger sample of major journals and research streams, (2) multiple dimensions of geographic bias, including researchers' affiliations and the geographic focus, and (3) all contiguous years of scholarship since the inception of the field.

To make headway on this front, a recent study by Nagaraj et al. (2020) offers a potential roadmap. This study examines the impact of reduced costs and sharing restrictions for satellite imagery data from NASA's Landsat program on the geographic diversity of Landsat-enabled environmental science. To do so, the authors collect 24,000 journal articles from over 34,000 authors from 1975 to 2005. Using machine-learning entity-detection algorithms, they geo-parse the publication titles, abstracts, and institutional affiliations to detect words that represent place names. Finally, these names are geo-coded to obtain latitudes and longitudes. For example, a published author from the "Department of Environmental Science, Tsinghua University" is matched to China, while the publication "A mini-surge on the Ryder Glacier, Greenland, observed by satellite radar interferometry" (Joughin et al., 1996) is matched to Greenland. Using this approach, the authors document how the increased accessibility of Landsat data democratized scientific research by encouraging more research from (and about) developing countries. Not only does this study suggest that both dimensions of geographic inequality are important, but also that current methods enable us to systematically measure these two forms of inequality from publication texts.

In the following sections, we build on these methods and apply them to the field of management with the goal of providing a quantitative assessment of the current status and dynamics of geographic representation in the field. This is important because having data-driven estimates can help assess the severity of the

issue, as well as providing a tangible baseline from which ongoing progress can be monitored and managed (Bar-Gill et al., 2023). Further, statistical estimates generally carry more weight in academic and policy circles and can lead to more targeted and effective interventions (Dilnot, 2012; Hjort et al., 2021). Surveying the major journals will help to capture the overall inequality in top management scholarship while also illuminating any heterogeneity by subfield (Arnett, 2008). Understanding long-term dynamics will be beneficial to learn if the field has made progress (and prompt reflection on why), or if it has not and is in need of a wake-up call (Wilson & Knutsen, 2022). Finally, looking at geography in terms of the location of management scholars, the geographies they focus on, and the interaction of these two variables will provide richer dynamics and enable more fine-tuned and nuanced analysis.

DATA AND METHODS

We focus on six reputable management journals: *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Organization Science*, and *Management Science*. Such a focus on top journals is standard in scientometric analysis (Baruch, 2001; Birkinshaw et al., 2016; Correa et al., 2013; Wilson & Knutsen, 2022) and makes sense given our focus on top management scholarship. However, one might worry that we only consider publications authored in English, and do not include publications in local and regional journals. This means we will inevitably miss noteworthy scholarship authored in non-Western contexts or by non-Western authors. Nevertheless, our choice is justified in our context because these six journals comprise the upper echelons of the field and set the research direction of management scholarship globally. Local journals, especially non-English language journals, have local audiences and are rarely read by non-native researchers. Indeed, these are the very journals that authors from non-Western contexts strive to publish in and are rewarded for doing so (Chen et al., 2021). They are also the journals from which major practitioner journals (e.g., *Harvard Business Review*) source, which gives them an out-sized role in deciding which management insights are implemented in practice (Birkinshaw et al., 2016). Finally, these journals consider themselves to be hubs of international management scholarship (Conlon, 2000; George et al., 2016). Hence, the decision to focus on the top management scholarship is quite natural; nevertheless, our findings should not be interpreted as representing the totality of management scholarship.

Conceptually, we link science to geography in two distinct ways. Firstly, we look at the distribution of regions studied; this is in line with most systematic reviews of WEIRD bias (Das et al., 2013; Nielsen et al., 2017; Wilson & Knutsen, 2022). The one difference is rather than focus on the nationality of experimental subjects – as is common in Psychology – we measure the geographies where a study is focused: for instance, a quasi-experimental setting or a data set unique to a specific country the study leverages. Further, following a growing literature, we also look at the distribution of management

researchers, as given by their institutional affiliations (Baruch, 2001; Briggs & Weathers, 2016). Not only will this help to assess the state of inclusivity in top management publishing – which we hold as intrinsically important – but it will also enable us to shed light on additional empirical questions, such as whether researchers from non-Western countries do indeed tend to focus more on their local contexts, even when publishing in US-based journals (Meadon & Spurrett, 2010; Nagaraj et al., 2020). To facilitate ease of interpretation, we categorize countries into several groups. In particular, following Nagaraj et al. (2020), we establish three regional categories using country income tiers from World Bank data: the United States, high-income countries other than the US, and mid-to-low-income countries. Fig. A2 shows the resulting categorization of countries. Note that this categorization is not a perfect separation of Western and non-Western as some high-income countries like Chile and Saudi Arabia do not belong to the West.

Typically, academic studies in the "Science of Science" and other related meta-science disciplines leverage meta-data procured from existing databases, such as OpenAlex, Scopus, and Web of Science. However, no such systematic meta-data pertaining to detailed and standardized geographical information exists for management publications. Hence, we need to manually obtain this information ourselves, which we do using a suite of machine-learning tools. In the following subsections, we briefly describe how we construct our list of publications, geo-code researchers' affiliations, and conduct geoparsing to identify the focal regions. For more details, see our data appendix[2] (Appendix A).

Publication List

To identify the list of papers to be included in our sample, we first draw from the official websites of the journals. We decided to scrape the websites because they contain "Archives" sections, which we believe to have the most comprehensive coverage of publication histories. While the difficulty of this process varies by journal and time period, we are able to obtain the full list of publication titles since inception and, in some cases, further publication-level information like the texts of abstracts. Note that our machine learning tools that process textual data will not identify abstracts if they are made available in non-textual formats like PDFs or images, which is sometimes the case for the official websites. Moreover, the raw texts of the publications will not always contain sufficient information about the authors' institutional affiliations.

As a result, we also obtain additional publication-level information from Dimensions, a new resource that is designed to enable researchers to explore, access, and analyze a wide array of research-related data, including publications, grants, patents, clinical trials, and policy documents, all within a single, interconnected database (Hook et al., 2020). In our specific context, there are several advantages to using Dimensions: first, Dimensions has comprehensive coverage even for old publications dating back to the 1950s, which enables us to analyze long-term trends over the past seven decades. Second, Dimensions has relatively comprehensive information with respect to authors' affiliations, which are raw

texts that we can clean, standardize, and geo-code.[3] Third, Dimensions provides strong coverage of paper abstracts. We export publication-level information from the Dimensions API and then match it to our cleaned list of publications based on the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) or title.

Geographic Focus

Our method enables us to detect any mentions of geographies in the content of the publications, which is defined as a city, state, country, or group of countries on which the paper is focusing. For this method, we focus on a publication's abstract or title to find direct mentions of locations and indirect mentions of country-specific entities; for example, agencies like USPTO are specific to the US. As we elaborate further in the data appendix, our decision to keep only the title and abstract instead of using the full manuscript leads to the highest rate of true positives while keeping false positives to a minimal level. This decision is standard in the literature (Phillips & Greene, 2020; Wilson & Knutsen, 2022). Nevertheless, we acknowledge that our procedure will likely understate the true number of topic mentions: this is especially the case when the publication focuses on the US since such a regional focus is more likely to be omitted in the title or abstract (Kahalon et al., 2022), or when the papers have a focus on three or more countries as country names tend not to be listed explicitly in the abstract. After cleaning the abstracts and titles, we leverage spaCy, an open-source software library for advanced NLP, as our key NLP tool to recognize organizations and geographic information. A detailed illustration of the geoparsing process is provided in the data appendix (see Appendix A).

Researcher Affiliations

Using the data exported from Dimensions, we are able to identify the names of any institutions authors are affiliated with, as well as the locations of these institutions. However, the data on affiliations are quite raw as there is considerable variability and complexity in their format: while some contain only the (un-standardized) name of the university or organization, others contain city, state, zip code, and in some cases superfluous information like department and position. Hence, we first use spaCy to recognize the names of organizations from the raw text. We clean these names and feed them into Geocodify's API, which searches for a potential match from Geocodify's underlying data sources, primarily OpenStreetMap, Who's On First, and GeoNames. Each match contains information including name, city, region, country, latitude, and longitude. Geocodify will return multiple potential matches for one input, so we filter the potential matches to identify the correct location. Finally, we conduct extensive manual checks to verify the accuracy of the geocoding. Looking forward, we aim to establish a data set of all institutions and their locations together with a matching rule dealing with raw strings of affiliation information to be used as a baseline for future research. A detailed illustration of the cleaning process is provided in Appendix A.

Summary Statistics

Table 1 provides summary statistics for our final dataset. We present the descriptive statistics at three levels: the publication-level, the publication-geofocus-level, and the publication-researcher-level. Panel A shows the publication-level statistics. Altogether, *Management Science* has 8,476 publications since 1954; *Organization Science* has 1,950 publications since 1990; *Academy of Management Review* has 2,589 publications since 1976; *Academy of Management Journal* has 3,589 publications since 1958; *Strategic Management Journal* has 3,034 publications since 1980; and *Administrative Science Quarterly* has 1,573 publications since 1956. Across all these journals, we are able to geo-code at least one researcher following our data processing procedures for 96% to 99% of publications, while we are able to identify a geographic focus for about 15% to 25% of publications. The one exception to this is AMR, which is generally a more theory-oriented journal. Our match rate for geographic focus is under 5%. We conducted a validation by manually looking at the title/abstract of a random sample of 250 publications and found that our algorithm fully identifies all the geographic focus we manually tagged: most of the papers without a geographic focus are theory papers. Throughout the paper, we focus on country-level mentions, which count for about 95% of all the geographic focus being identified.[4]

At the publication level, each publication is assigned to one of the three categories: "US Only" indicates that all the researchers (or geographic focuses) that correspond to a given publication are located in the US, "≥1 High Income Non-US" indicates there is at least 1 researcher (or geographic focuses) that located in a high-income country other than the US and there is no researcher (or geographic focuses) located in mid- or low-income countries, and "≥1 Mid-Low Income" indicates at least one researcher (or geographic focus) located in a mid or low-income country. This assignment guarantees that each publication is assigned to only one category while (intentionally) providing more opportunities for non-US publications to gain visibility. Further, since academic research in the US generally leads the world, it is meaningful to look at the relative existence of researchers from non-US countries instead of simply comparing raw numbers. Overall, conditional on any topic being identified, 12% to 19% of publications have at least some focus on mid- or low-income countries. The share of publications with some focus on high-income countries other than the US is comparable at 22% to 32%, while the share of publications focusing entirely on the US is about 51% to 66%. On the other hand, the distribution of researcher affiliations is even more skewed: about 55% to 78% of publications are authored by researchers *all* affiliated with a US institution; about 19% to 40% of the publications have at least one author affiliated with an institution in a high-income country other than the US,[5] and only 1% to 6% of the publications have an author from a mid- or low-income country.

Panel B shows publication-geofocus level statistics, i.e., each observation represents a publication and geofocus pair, as each paper can have multiple geographic focuses. We assign each country-level focus to one of three groups: "United States," "High Income Non-US", or "Mid-Low Income." With each

Table 1. Summary Statistics.

	MNSC	OrgSci	AMR	AMJ	SMJ	ASQ
Panel A: Publication Level						
Initial Publication Year	1954	1990	1976	1958	1980	1956
Number of Publications	8476	1950	2589	3589	3034	1573
Percent with Geo-Focus Coded	14.37	24.51	3.75	16.3	28.31	26.57
Publications with Geo-Focus Coded	1218	478	97	585	859	418
Publications with Country Level Geo-Focus	1157	453	92	567	823	408
Only US Focus	760	233	52	315	434	240
≥1 High Income Non-US Focus	254	136	29	147	241	106
≥1 Mid-Low Income Focus	143	84	11	105	148	62
Percent with Researcher Geo-coded	96.02	98.31	96.25	95.54	97.92	99.75
Publications with Researcher Geo-coded	8139	1917	2492	3429	2971	1514
Only US Researcher	5341	1063	1945	2520	1714	1165
≥1 High Income Non-US Researcher	2296	780	523	766	1078	295
≥1 Mid-Low Income Researcher	502	74	24	143	179	54
Panel B: Publication-GeoFocus Level						
Number of Geo-Focus Coded	1537	608	118	711	1073	513
Country Level Geo-Focus Coded	1434	566	108	680	994	491
United States Focus	963	301	65	386	536	292
High Income Non-US Focus	305	173	32	183	288	132
Mid-Low Income Focus	166	92	11	111	170	67
Panel C: Publication-Researcher Level						
Number of Researchers	18237	4388	4617	7987	6763	2832
Percent of Researchers Geo-coded	93.38	95.53	93.83	92.74	95	95.48
Number of Researchers Geo-coded	17029	4192	4332	7407	6425	2684
United States Researchers	12520	2808	3500	5805	4315	2188
High Income Non-US Researchers	3828	1298	806	1404	1866	432
Mid-Low Income Researchers	681	86	26	198	244	64

Notes: This table lists summary statistics of 6 journals at the publication level (Panel A), the publication-researcher level (Panel B), and the Publication-GeoFocus level (Panel C). One publication can have multiple researchers and/or topics being geo-coded. In Panel A, publications are uniquely assigned to one of the three categories: "only US" means all the researchers or topics are in the US, "≥1 High Income Non-US" means there exists at least 1 researcher or topic that is in a high-income country other than the US and there is no researcher or topic in mid-low income countries, and "≥1 Mid-Low Income" means there exists at least 1 researcher or topic that is in a mid- or low-income country. In Panel B, the number of topics geocoded is the number of regions studied we are able to identify following the procedure illustrated in Appendix A.2. See text for details. In Panel C, the number of researchers is at the publication-researcher level so researchers with multiple publications are counted multiple times. The number of researchers geocoded is the number of researchers whose affiliations we are able to identify and detect the latitude, longitude, city, state, and country information following the procedure illustrated in Appendix A.3.

topic weighted by its propensity to appear in publications, about 53% to 67% of referenced geographies are in the US: 21% to 31% are in high-income countries other than the US, and about 10% to 17% are in mid- or low-income countries.

Finally, Panel C shows the publication-researcher level statistics. On average, the top management journals have about 1.8 to 2.2 authors for each publication, and we are able to geocode about 93% to 96% of researchers. Note that any author with more than one publication in the top six journals would be recorded with multiple observations. Hence, our usage of the term "researchers" in this context does not refer to the unique number of researchers: each researcher is weighted by the number of publications they have or their productivity. Here we can simply assign individual researchers "equitably" to the region of their affiliated institution: "United States," "High Income Non-US," or "Mid-Low Income." About 67% to 81% of researchers are affiliated with a university or organization in the US; 16% to 31% are from high-income countries other than the US; and less than 4% are from mid- or low-income countries.[6] We can see that while the number of researchers from mid- or low-income countries is less than 4%, the percentage of regional focus in mid- or low-income countries can be as high as 17%, which suggests increasing attention to non-Western countries from the Western world.

Fig. 1 plot (i) shows the total number of publications in the six focal journals each year, and plot (ii) shows the number of publications for every year in the sample time frame for each journal. The number of yearly publications is relatively stable for the six journals in the three decades from 1980 to 2010, while some witnessed a growing trend in the most recent decade. Particularly for *Management Science*, there has been a "nearly exponential" growth trend in the past 10 years: the number of yearly publications in *Management Science* has exceeded the number of publications from all five other journals combined since 2018.[7]

MAIN RESULTS

We aim to shed light on the following three questions: (1) where does management research focus on? (2) where are management researchers located? And (3) how do physical location and geographic focus interact?

The Geographic Focus of Management Research

We first examine the distribution of geographic focus in the top management publications. Note that only about 20–30% of articles have a geo-coded geographic focus, and the presented results are all conditional based on a regional focus being identified. See Appendix A for a discussion on method and precision.

Fig. 2 shows a choropleth plot of the relative intensity of research focus at the country level on a log scale. It shows a clear US dominance followed by interests in China, Canada, Japan, India, and EU countries, while there is no research focusing on most countries in Africa and the Middle East. The overall results for all publications with an identified research topic in the top six journals are summarized in Fig. 3. Panel A shows the percentages by region, and Panel B shows

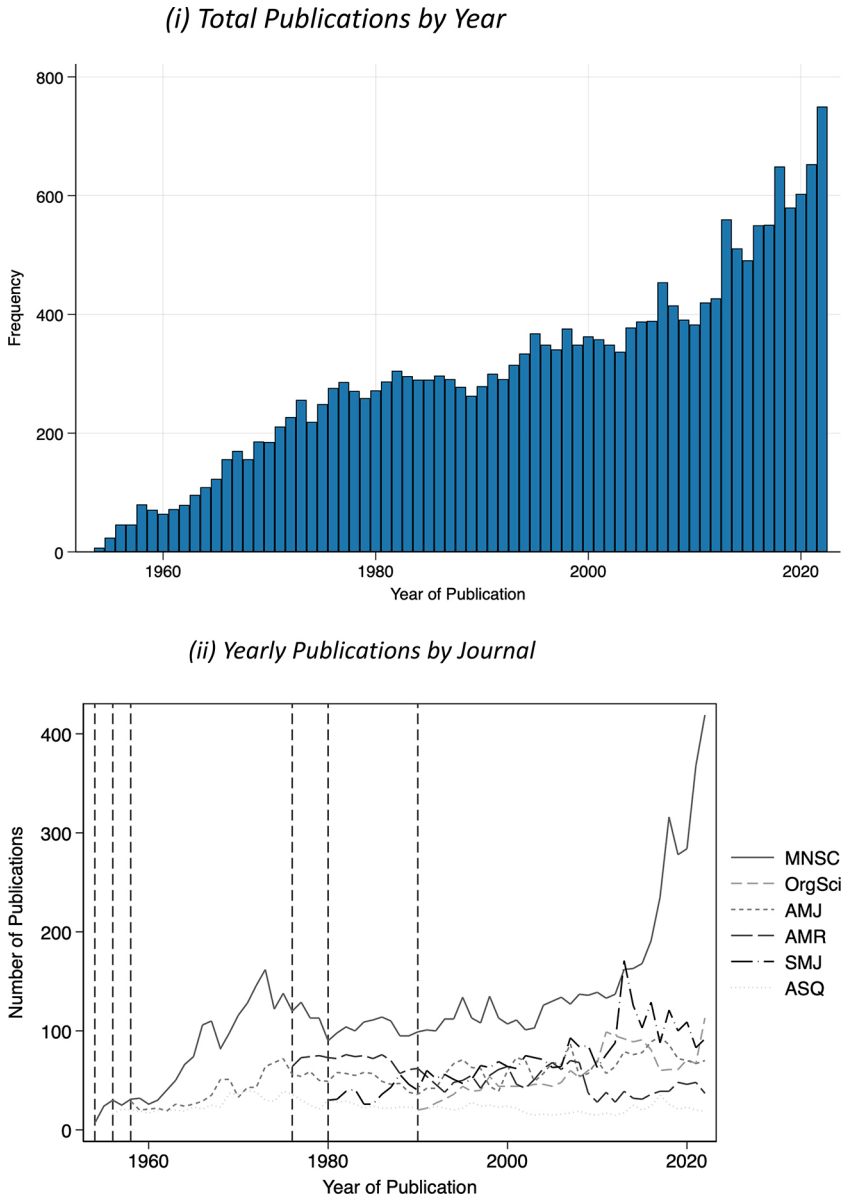

Fig. 1. Number of Top Management Publications, 1954–2022.
Notes: This figure shows the raw number of publications across the top 6 Management journals over time. Plot (i) depicts the overall count by year, and plot (ii) decomposes the yearly count by journal. See the text for more details.

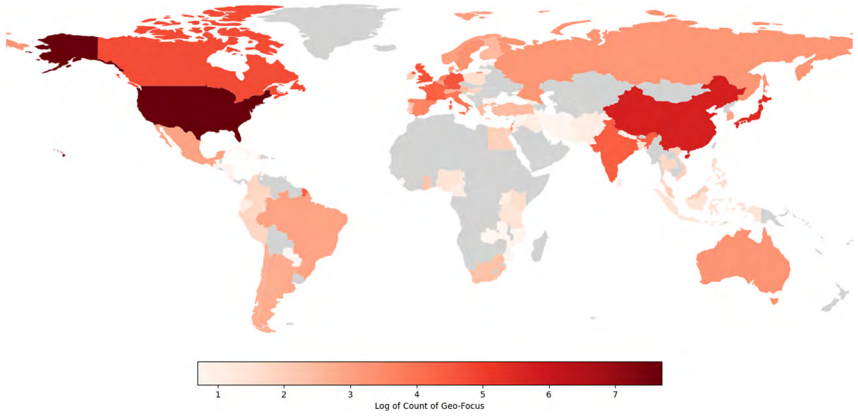

Fig. 2. Countries Studied in Top Management Publications. *Notes*: This figure visualizes the frequency of each country being studied as a geo-focus in a choropleth plot. The color coding uses an exponential scale. Gray indicates that no geo-focus is identified based on our method. See text for more details.

how these percentages change over time. Plot (i) is at the publication level and shows that about 58% of the geographic focus is in the US, about 27% in other high-income countries, and about 15% in the mid- or low-income countries. Since only a small number of publications have geographic focuses on multiple countries, the difference between the publication-level and publication-researcher-level results is minimal.

Plots (iii) and (iv) depict the trends in geographic focus.[8] Interestingly, the distribution of geographic focus has been remarkably stable over the past seven decades: this is even more impressive as it turns out that there have been significant compositional changes to the research force. In general, about 55% to 60% of geographic focus is within the US, 20% to 40% in other high-income countries, and 15% to 20% in mid- or low-income countries. This suggests that even when there is a paucity of researchers from mid- or low-income countries, there is nonetheless persistent interest in studying the developing world. However, this interest has not grown significantly over time. Appendix Fig. B2 shows the relative frequency of the three region categories across the six journals.

Locations of Management Researcher Affiliations

We then examine where the authors in our sample are physically based. The overall results combining all the six journals are shown in Fig. 4. Panel A shows the percentages by region, and Panel B shows how these percentages change over time. Plot (i) is at the publication-level and shows that 67.34% of all publications in our sample are authored by researchers all affiliated with a US institution, 27.93% of the publications have a combination of researchers from the US and non-US high-income countries, and only 4.72% of the publications have at least one researcher affiliated with an institution in a mid- or low-income country. This inequality is

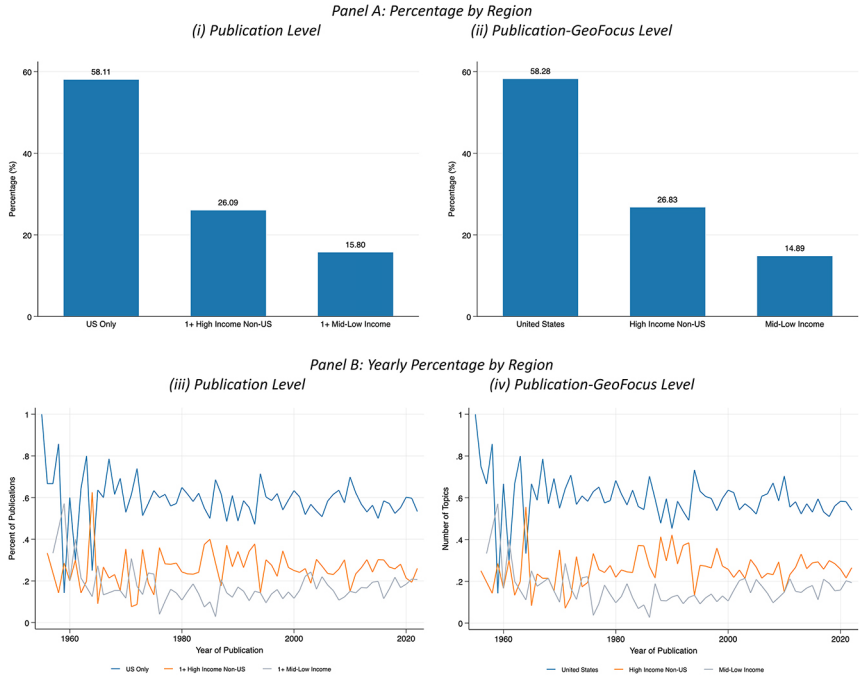

Fig. 3. Distribution of Geo-Focus in Top Management Publications. *Notes*: This figure visualizes the bias to study Western regions in management publications, conditional on a region being identified. Panel A depicts percentages by region over the full sample period and Panel B depicts percentages each year. Plots (i) and (iii) are at the publication level, where each publication is assigned to one of 3 regional categories: "US Only," "≥1 High Income Non-US," and "≥1 Mid-Low Income." "US Only" means all the regions studied are in the US; "≥1 High Income Non-US" means at least one of the regions studied is in a high-income country other than the U.S. and there is no region studied in mid-low income countries; and "≥1 Mid-Low Income" means there is at least one region studied that is in a mid- or low-income country. Plots (ii) and (iv) are at the Publication-GeoFocus level as one publication can have multiple research focuses. Each topic is assigned one of 3 region categories: "United States," "High Income Non-US," and "Mid-Low Income." See text for more details.

even more pronounced when viewed at the publication-researcher level. As plot (ii) shows, 74.14% of researchers are from the US, and only 3.07% are from a mid- or low-income country when weighted by researchers' productivity. Hence, in comparison with the results for research focus, there is significantly more US dominance in management research with respect to researchers.

Turning to trends over time, plots (iii) and (iv) highlight that while management research was completely dominated by the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, its share of both publications and researchers has been gradually declining

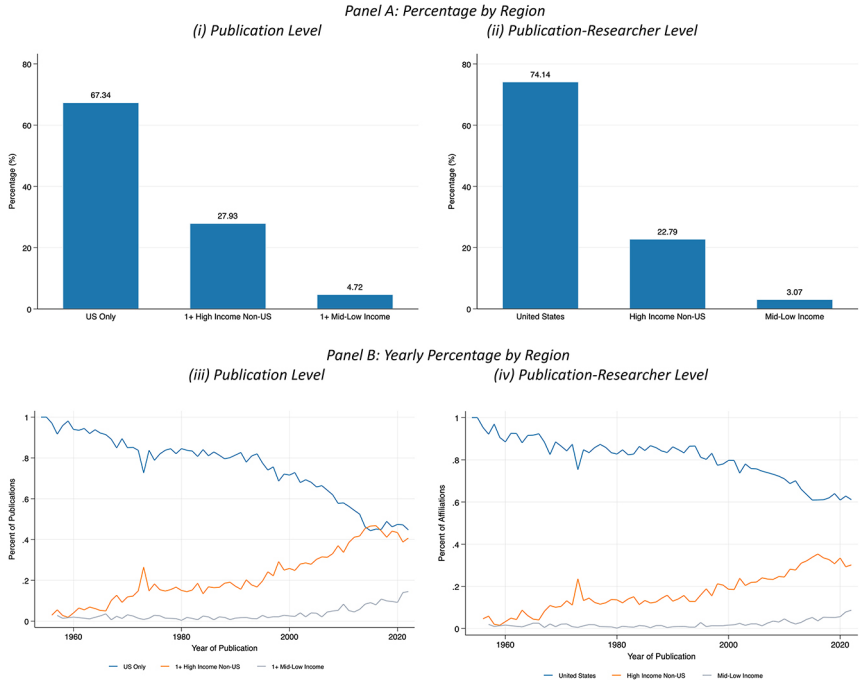

Fig. 4. Distribution of Management Scholars in Top Management Publications. *Notes*: This figure visualizes the bias in top scholarship towards authors located in Western regions. Panel A depicts percentages by region over the full sample period, and Panel B depicts percentages each year. Plots (i) and (iii) are at the publication level; due to the potential for multiple co-authors, a publication is considered "US Only' if all co-authors are based in the US, "≥1 High Income Non-US" if at least 1 co-author is based in a high-income country outside the US (and none of the co-authors are based in mid-low income countries), and "≥1 Mid-Low Income" if at least 1 coauthor is based in a mid- or low-income country; Plots (ii) and (iv) are at the publication-researcher level and hence weighted by the productivity of the researcher; individual researchers are assigned to the region of their affiliated institution: "United States," "High Income Non-US," and "Mid-Low Income." See the text for more details.

over time, particularly since the late 1990s.[9] Since then, the representation of researchers from high-income non-US countries has started to increase, peaking around 2018 when nearly 50% of the top management publications involved at least one researcher from high-income non-US countries. Nevertheless, there still exists a large 30% gap in the productivity-weighted share of researchers. On the other hand, the trend for researchers from mid- or low-income countries was nearly flat prior to the late 2000s, and the increase since has been relatively slow. In 2022, about 15% of publications involved a researcher from a mid- or low-income country, whereas the productivity-weighted share of researchers was less than 10%.

We also visualize the trend of affiliated institutions with top management publications. We record the latitude and longitude of each university and aggregate them to the grid level with a size of 1-degree latitude and 1-degree longitude. For each grid point, we record the earliest year that there is a researcher affiliated with any institution inside that grid point published in a top management journal. This measure shows the entry of affiliated institutions into the field of management. The grid points are visualized in Fig. 5. The markers are coded with different shapes according to research publication periods: plus signs for pre-1990, triangles for 1990-2010, and squares for post-2010 entries in top management journals.

This figure shows that the majority of markers in the United States are plus signs, suggesting that most of the US institutions (especially on the coasts) had been actively publishing in top management journals before 1990. After 1990, an increasing number of institutions in the central areas of the US started publishing, as revealed by the triangles and sparsely distributed square markers. In Europe, however, the plus signs are mainly concentrated in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and there are clear clusters of triangles and squares, especially in Spain and central Germany. This hints at the rise of high-income non-US institutions since the 1990s. In mid- or low-income countries, there are only a handful of institutions that published before 1990 or even before 2010: the majority of initial publications were after 2010. This trend is especially prominent in China, India, and Argentina. These results align well with Fig. 4 Panel B, where the number of researchers from high-income countries other than the US started to

Fig. 5. Entry of Affiliated Institutions in Top Management Publications.
Notes: This figure visualizes the timing of entry of institutions into the top 6 management journals. Entry means the existence of a publishing researcher affiliated with that institution. Each dot represents one or more institutions with a researcher who has published in a top management journal within the 1-degree latitude × 1-degree longitude grid cell. In total, there are 700 grid points representing 2598 unique institutions. The color of the dot codes the first time an author affiliated with the institution publishes in a top management journal. Plus signs indicate researchers publishing in top journals before 1990. Triangles represent researchers publishing for the first time in between 1990 and 2010. Squares represent the entry of new researchers publishing for the first time since 2010.

rise in the 1990s, while in mid- or low-income countries, the rise has only started in the recent decade.

Finally, having reviewed the overall trends in management research, we decompose these trends by journal. Appendix Fig. B5 shows the results at the publication level for each of the six journals, and Appendix Fig. B6 shows the results at the publication-researcher level. In general, each of the journal follows the same overall trend as described above, however the timing and the extent of increases in non-US representation differs from journal to journal.

Interaction Between Location and Regional Focus

Finally, we combine the distribution of researcher affiliations and regional focus to reveal the rich dynamics of how researchers decide which regions to study. Fig. 6 shows a scaled heatmap of the joint frequencies. Plot (i) is at the publication level, with a total of 3,357 publications. Plot (ii) is at the publication-researcher-topic level with a total of 7,566 observations: each publication can have multiple researchers and multiple regions (e.g., a publication with three researchers and two regions would yield six observations).

The most common frequency involves US researchers studying US topics: about 40% of all publications consist of only US researchers focusing exclusively on the US. This frequency is even greater when weighted by researcher productivity and the frequency of topics. The second and third related categories consist of US researchers studying other high-income countries and researchers from other high-income countries studying the US, respectively. Altogether, US researchers are primarily studying the US and other high-income countries, while researchers from other high-income countries are mainly studying themselves and the US Such a loop between the high-income countries accounts for more than 80% of all publications. Notably, a small but prominent share of publications (about 15%) are researchers in high-income countries (including the US) studying mid- or low-income countries. This appears to be an important spillover of knowledge from the developed world to the developing world, while most of these developing-focused researchers in high-income countries originally come from mid- or low-income countries.

Lastly, we further decompose these results by specific countries instead of regional categories. We produce one list of the top 10 countries in terms of the number of researchers and another list of the top 10 in terms of regional focus. There are seven countries that overlap: Canada, China, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The three countries that only feature in the list of researchers are Australia, Singapore, and Spain, while the three countries that only feature in the list of regions are Germany, India, and Japan. Fig. 7 shows a heat plot of the country-level joint frequencies, where the percentage in each cell shows the relative frequency within a row. The union of the 13 countries is included to ensure the symmetry of the heatmap, and we use an exponential scale to color-code the frequencies. There are several clear findings. Firstly, researchers in all countries focus on the US, and for nearly all countries, this is their primary focus. Secondly, researchers from the majority of countries are also interested in studying their home countries. This is most

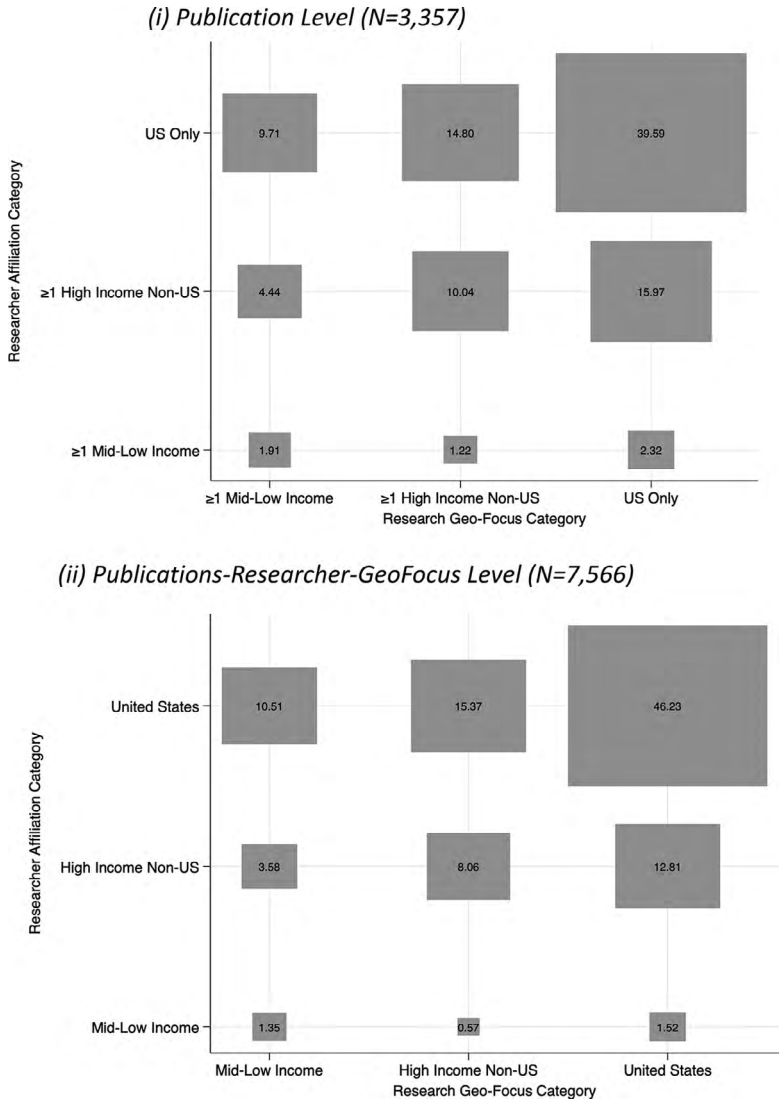

Fig. 6. Management Scholars and Geo-Focus in Top Management Publications. *Notes*: This figure shows the interaction of management scholars' locations (vertical axis) and the regions they study (horizontal axis) in top Management journals, conditional on the region being identified. Plot (i) is at the publication level, where each publication is assigned to one of 3 regional categories: "US Only," "≥1 High Income Non-US," and "≥1 Mid-Low Income." Each publication is assigned twice: once based on researcher affiliation (vertical axis) and once based on research topic (horizontal axis). Plot (ii) is at the publication-researcher-topic level as one publication can have multiple researchers and multiple regional focuses. Each researcher and each topic is assigned one of 3 region categories: "United States," "High Income Non-US," and "Mid-Low Income." See text for more details.

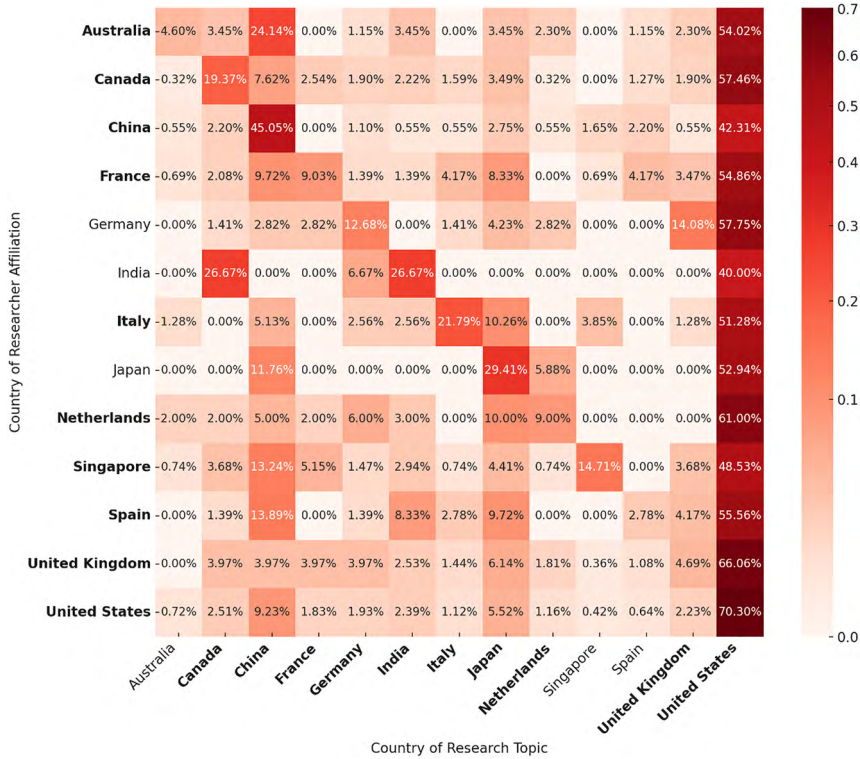

Fig. 7. Country-Level View of Geographic Bias in Top Management Publications. *Notes*: This figure shows the country-level view of management scholars' locations (vertical axis) and the regions they study (horizontal axis) in top management journals, conditional on the region being identified (by country). The top 10 countries in terms of researcher affiliations are shown in bold on the vertical axis, while the top 10 countries in terms of regional focus are shown in bold on the horizontal axis. There are 7 countries that belong to both lists. To make the plot symmetric, we take the union of the two lists, which makes the plot 13 × 13. The percentage in each cell shows the relative frequency within its row, so each row sums to 100%. The color coding uses an exponential scale. See text for more details.

prominent in China, where more researchers focus on their own country (45.05%) than on the US (42.31%). Finally, looking at the vertical columns, there is a general interest in studying China and Japan, as well as other Western countries like Canada and the United Kingdom.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we show the extent to which management research is concentrated in and focused on the Western world. To do so, we restrict our attention to

scholarship in the top six flagship journals, covering all publications authored in the past seven decades. Because this analysis requires extensive meta-data on the geography of scientific publications – and no such meta-data currently exists – we manually collect all raw publication texts from the journals ourselves and leverage machine-learning-based tools, in particular NLP, to infer the locations of both management scholars and the geographies they study. First and foremost, our findings reveal that the vast majority of top publications are authored by US-based scholars. While researchers from other high-income countries have seen respectable improvements in representation over time, the same cannot be said for researchers from low-income countries: their entry into top journals only started in the last decade and remains minimal. While there is slightly less geographic inequality in terms of the regions studied, a majority of top publications and researchers still focus on US geographies. This distribution is stable over time. Finally, our analysis suggests the location of the authors and their regional focus interact in important ways. In particular, the Western worlds tends to look inward: the majority of papers are authored by researchers in the high-income countries (including the US) focusing on these very countries. While scholars from low-income countries also exhibit inequality in the United States, they contribute additional topics from their own countries.

Contributions

Our paper contributes to several literatures. Firstly, we contribute to the recent literature on the colonization of management (Banerjee, 2021; Bruton et al., 2022; Filatotchev et al., 2022; Jammulamadaka et al., 2021). This work interrogates the production of knowledge in management scholarship, contending that it largely originated in the West (in particular the Anglo-American world), led by Western voices, and consequently represents Western perspectives, values, and frameworks. Nevertheless, such scholarship is widely considered to be universal, even if it fails to account for theoretical complications that arise from non-Western contexts or neglects such contexts in the first place. Further, scholars worry that efforts to rectify these issues and broaden contexts in management theory may lead to co-opting non-Western knowledge without including non-Western voices, leading to a new form of cultural imperialism (Banerjee, 2021). However, while this literature has revealed important channels for self-critique and growth for management scholars, it has mostly focused on theorizing. We contend that it would benefit from data-driven estimates that contextualize the severity of the problem and enable informed discussion to move the needle. Despite important early advances in this regard (Baruch, 2001), we provide the first to provide such estimates that cover a big slice of top management scholarship since the 1950s.

Secondly, we contribute to a robust literature that documents a general WEIRD bias across the social sciences. Starting with psychology, researchers discovered a significant tendency for experiments to recruit study participants from Western industrialized countries (Arnett, 2008; Henrich et al., 2010). Since then, a number of systematic reviews have been undertaken across the social sciences to understand whether scientists generally over-sample from Western contexts, including

in Political Science and International Relations, Economics, Geography, Human-centered computing, etc. We show that management scholarship is no exception to this phenomenon; rather, our estimates suggest it is particularly prone to a Western-centric bias. For instance, Wilson and Knutsen (2022) find that, in Political Science, references to Western countries in titles or abstracts outnumber references to non-Western countries by a factor of 1.6. In management scholarship, the same number is 5.5, over three times worse.

Third, we contribute to a nascent literature that has taken advantage of advances in NLP to determine geographic attributes from the content of publication texts (Nagaraj et al., 2020; Wilson, 2017; Wilson & Knutsen, 2022). This literature has thus far showcased one use-case of this capability: measuring the geographic concentration of regions studied. We go one step further and systematically relate the physical location of management scholars to the regions they study (see Briggs & Weathers, 2016 for another example). We find that scholars based in a given country do generally tend to contribute more research about that country. Beyond these descriptive measures, we envision that these methods can be extended to also study other questions such as the effect of the diversity of journal editorial boards on the geographic diversity of a journal.

Finally, we contribute a new suite of methodological tools to the literature on "Science of Science" and related meta-science disciplines. Our tools overcome a key challenge in this literature – namely that meta-data is not systematically collected and made available for management publications – by using machine-learning and other computing technologies to manually (but efficiently) automate this process. This enables us to obtain all management publications (21,000+) across multiple flagship journals for every year since 1954 and systematically compile geographic meta-data. Our tools and data can potentially enable researchers in other disciplines as well to undertake systematic reviews of the extent of geographic bias and address some of the technical bottlenecks, should the meta-data not already be available.

All in all, our findings should prompt significant concern in the management community. At the highest levels of the field, scholarship has been (and continues to be) highly Western-centric. This raises the question of whether the field can hope to make sense of the global diversity of business phenomena and thereby remain relevant to management practitioners around the world. In an increasingly interconnected world, where multinational companies (MNCs) continue to grow in importance, this should be a matter of concern. Further, as management scholars ourselves, we actively aspire to be members of a field that embraces inclusivity and that reflects the diversity of contexts we study. Yet, even though the management community (including the flagship journals) has admirably shared this commitment, our findings suggest that in practice, this has not yet been realized: representation among lower-income researchers is low, and the trends are not improving much over time. This suggests that the field needs to take more active steps to combat geographic bias.

What are the steps it can take? More research is needed, but Baruch (2001) finds some evidence that the geographical representation of authors is correlated to the geo-origins of the editorial board. In one case study, he finds a particularly

strong link at the Academy of Management Journal during the years 1996–1998, when more international scholars were added to its board under the editorship of Professor Anne Tsui. This echoes findings from other fields. For instance, Brogaard et al. (2014) find causal evidence that in economics and finance, the appointment of an editor increases the publication rate of the editor's colleagues by 100%. Further, these "inside" publications garner *increased* citations, which implies that editorial networks enhance the editorial process, not compromise it. Altogether, this suggest interventions at the editorial level are quite promising. As an alternative, Doktor et al. (1991) also recommend special issues and forums as targeted opportunities to broaden the international scope of management thought and practice.

Limitations

Finally, our study is not without limitations. When looking at the geographic distribution of management scholars, we only consider the location of the institutional affiliations. Future work should also consider the race, ethnicity, or country of birth of scholars to shed more light on what is a multidimensional problem. For instance, many scholars likely grow up in non-Western contexts but are educated at Western institutions and later acquire full-time appointments at these institutions. While our analysis suggests it is quite possible these scholars focus on Western contexts at similar rates to scholars from Western origins, they nevertheless contribute to improved representation and diversity in the field. However, the fact remains that they are socialized into Western systems of knowledge production, which suggests the location of the affiliated institution continues to remain an important vector of geographic bias. In addition, to ascertain a publication's focus geographies, we only consider its titles and abstracts. While this is a standard choice in the literature, future work should consider how best to leverage the full publication texts. Finally, our study does not consider the role of citations in geographic bias. It is possible that even conditional on publishing in the top journals, non-Western scholars are frequently less cited in their work, limiting their ability to influence the field. Our current analysis does not speak to this possibility.

Overall, our study provides quantitative estimates of two important dimensions of geographic bias in top management scholarship. This is the first step toward the broader goal of "decolonizing management studies." Ultimately, our hope is to mark a step forward in addressing the need for a more inclusive and robust academic field with positive externalities for all regions around the world.

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NOTES

1. See https://aom.org/membership for more details.
2. The Appendix is available online at https://www.abhishekn.com/publications-all/geographic-bias-management
3. We cross-check all information with other sources, like OpenAlex, Scopus, and Web of Science, to verify the completeness and accuracy of our dataset. Other sources are not primarily used due to data limitations explained in Appendix A.
4. City or state-level focuses are all elevated to country level. The 5% of topic focuses not included in the analysis are at the continental level: for example, Latin America and North America.
5. Based on the definition, this does not include publications with a researcher from a mid- or low-income country.
6. Throughout the article, we use "from a country" to means that the researcher is affiliated with an institution in that country as the time of publication. There is no connection with the researcher's race, ethnicity, or country of birth.
7. Management Science has been producing 12 issues each year since 1966, but the number of articles per issue has been increasing drastically these years. In 2023, there are on average about 30 to 35 articles per issue, while ten years ago in 2013, the average number of articles per issue was about 12 to 13.
8. The raw counts of the line charts over time in Plot B are presented in Appendix Fig. B1.
9. The raw counts of the line charts over time in Plot B are presented in Appendix Fig. B3.

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