



## What Got Us Here, Won't Get Us There

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# Designing Pluriverse Knowledge in Design Research: The Case of the 8th International Forum of Design as a Process

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**Abstract:** The global knowledge ecosystem is affected by ethnocentrism and witnesses Western monopolies of knowledge that built hegemonic structures and narratives. The paper proposes a vision that shifts from processes of knowledge power and control to processes of knowledge ownership and leadership through new international interactions based on increased accessibility and visibility in design publications. The idea of building a design network between Latin countries led to the foundation of the Latin Network for the Development of Design Processes. The 8<sup>th</sup> International Forum Design as a Process represents a testbed for this new experimentation of community-led knowledge targeting the Latin Network and Global South countries. The research presents a new frame of knowledge accessibility based on different assessment values that acknowledge the intertwin of cultural identity and vernacular design, in favour of equity and inclusivity.

**Keywords:** Knowledge Ecosystem, Endemic, Global South, Research Access, Equity

## 1. Introduction: Global Diversity in New Knowledge Production and Leadership

In the last century, we have assisted a relevant epistemological change in knowledge production and in the way of thinking and organising knowledge. With the arising of the digital age, Carayannis and Campbell (2006) claimed the coexistence and co-development of diverse knowledge modes in an interconnected and networked perspective. In this context, human cognitive capacity is expanded by technological means because cognition is off-loaded into the environment and artefacts, and the individual dimension of knowledge merges on collective intelligence, that is, the capacity, enhanced by digital networks, of human communities to cooperate intellectually (Levy, in Peters 2015).

In this framework of huge opportunities, biocultural diversity of knowledge seems to be disregarded. The global knowledge ecosystem is affected by ethnocentrism and witnesses Western monopolies of

knowledge that built hegemonic structures and narratives (Fiormonte, 2017). Graham et al. (2011) presented a series of maps showing the cultural and geographical biases of global knowledge in terms of both infrastructure and cultural discourse; some authors speak about “peripheries countries”, and Western domination seems to be untouched (Kieńć, 2016).

Academic scholarship and publication too reflect these unequal geographies of knowledge: there is a linguistic bias in the global journal system (Larivière & Desrochers, 2015) and a clearly visible publishing oligopoly (Larivière, Haustein, & Mongeon, 2015). Scientific publishing mirrors an unbalanced power of expression that raises questions about the visibility, diffusion and consolidation of scientific thinking of a wider geographical spread, with specific regard towards the non-homologation and the need for the legitimisation of rather different cultures of knowledge organisation, especially from the Global South (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Chan, 2014).

Anyway, the developing geopolitical scenario is challenging the current knowledge and publishing monopolies (Fiormonte & Priego, 2016): Digital Humanities, for instance, started reacting to these unequal power relationships, questioning political representation and cultural diversity, encoding standards, digital infrastructures and linguistic hegemonies, to create a genuinely democratic and international scholarly community with more biocultural diversity (Fiormonte, 2017). As explained by Fiormonte et al. (2022), it is necessary to decolonize the digital humanities so far troubled by a lack of perspectives beyond Westernized and Anglophone contexts and assumptions. In this process, the distance and assumed relationship between centre and periphery is fading and border thinking (Mignolo 2012) from the margins, where often the means are less, but the freedom to innovate is greater, becomes relevant. According to Fiormonte (2017) *“It is vital that the emerging peripheries talk amongst themselves, and boost the South-South dialogue on theoretical models and practical shared solutions”*. In this frame, digital resources should enable the emergent diversity of knowledge (Boast et al., 2007). And the same must do scientific publishing (Lupo, 2022).

However, the ideology of knowledge supremacy must be questioned beyond the critique of modernity and colonialism, proposing new mindsets, theories, and methods to transform the world's dominant hegemonic narrative into multiple alternatives. To achieve the DEAI (diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion) imperative also in the knowledge ecosystem, it is necessary to overcome the approach of “tokenism”: it is essential to embrace new ways of thinking, allowing actors outside of the mainstream (other than the dominant European and North American perspectives) to transform the dominant plot and therefore move to worlds of many centres (Leitão & Noel, 2022). Addressing pluriversality and multipolarity are crucial issues for new geopolitics of knowledge (Mignolo, 2018; Reiter, 2018; Escobar, 2018).

These reflections are common to design too, often concerned with the concept of peripheral vision of design, for which design should be done *in* the peripheries and not *for* (Bonsiepe, 2003); or marginality to which design history poses some design models (Fry, 1995): Fry recognises how design education and professional practice is deeply embedded in a Eurocentric epistemological foundation, and the issue of decolonising design opens to other voices the hegemonic design discourse of the North (Fry, 2017). Recently, the concept of “power” is one of the critical fields of contemporary design, to engage polemically with the opportunities to rethink what designing can be in a world based on radical interdependence and therefore promoting plural and choral narratives on contemporary design (Iñiguez Flores & Gianfrate, 2022).

In this pluriverse context, we aim to propose a vision that shifts from processes of knowledge power and control to processes of knowledge ownership and leadership (Mabey, Kulich, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2012), directing an epistemological change in the academic design community by driving processes of training and upskilling about new (social, technological means of) knowledge production forms and contexts. In the next paragraph therefore, we will present the experiences of the development

of the Latin Network for the Development of Design as a Process, and its 8th International Forum, especially devoted to the topic.

Finally, to really dismantle the existing established structures and make them more permeable, it is also mandatory to reframe excellence and impact assessment in a pluriverse perspective.

## 2. Ecologies of Knowledge and the Acknowledgement of Endogenous Design Cultures

In the field of modern knowledge, there is a clear dichotomy and distinction between true and false, granting to modern science the paradigmatic monopoly of this epistemological dispute (Santos, 2014). This division, defined as abyssal thinking, causes a monopoly of knowledge which determines scientific and nonscientific forms of truth. Santos (2014) argues that the hegemonic paradigm is held by Western modernity in the dispute between scientific and non-scientific. Nowadays, this paradigm is being challenged, especially in the field of design cultures, where concepts of inclusivity and intersectionality are becoming foundational concepts of design practice (Khandwala, 2019). The new challenge is to embrace cultures and diverse epistemologies and to invite researchers from non-Western education to contribute to the design narrative without just allowing them to play only a role in the hegemonic narrative (Leitão & Noel, 2022). Contributions should be enabled by the act of listening, as design practice is the medium between the values and ideals of culture and the tangible reality (Buchanan, 2001). Western design practice must consider culture's role in the design process because design thinking and practice change under different cultural values and ideals (Noel & Leitão, 2018); the case studies and design projects produced outside the hegemonic Centre finally draw attention to indigenous/endogenous creativity and new disruptive perspectives for the disciplines. Cardini (2022) argues that empirical and vernacular knowledge is a kind of design owned by people, not vice versa. Endogenesis attempts to describe bottom-up dynamics, identify what comes from within and understand where design belongs as a native species. According to the author's critical thinking, global design practices have often played the role of the exogenous entities, the experts, the saviours, and the problem-solvers who, through an attentive analysis of whatever context, are supposedly capable of creating solutions wherever there's an issue to fix. The "global design practices" belong to the Global North hemisphere, often disregarding the intertwin of cultural identity and vernacular knowledge in favour of hegemonic scientific truth. The discipline and practice of design are currently facing a need for plurality, for a global permeability to multicultural fluxes and empirical multiperspective (Alvelos & Barreto, 2022). Design is now undergoing a process of reconnection with endogenous and endemic practices in order to acknowledge and increase awareness of the undeniable epistemological impact of the dominant narrative and canons on the global design community. According to St John (2022) design practice exists in relation to local knowledge ecologies, ontologies, systems, and kinship responsibilities. The most evident impact of the global system of knowledge is that Academic knowledge in scientific publishing takes different forms in the Global South (Mehmeti, 2022); there is a mainstream methodological structure in ways of thinking, producing, and organising knowledge, mainly belonging to the Western and Anglo-Saxon "centre". Valentine (2022) sheds light on recognising the different cultures of design in academic scientific journals, not only geographically but in terms of cultures of thinking. A community-led knowledge and new editorial workflows should be reinvented to engage communities to experiment and prototype new knowledge interactions through open peer review, social annotations, or collaborative writing and editing, shifting from individual proprietary forms of authorship towards more communal forms of knowledge (Adema & Kiesenwetter, 2022).

The Western diktat "Publish or Perish" hinders the scientific advancement of the Global South and largely impacts on the dissemination of local knowledge; in order to challenge the privileged

knowledge generated in the Global North, the present article argues the need to expand community-led knowledge through a new collaborative approach in international events to engage researchers and early career researchers towards new knowledge interactions. The recent 8th International Forum of Design as a Process held in Bologna in June 2022 and organised by the Latin Network for the Development of Design as a Process represents a relevant case study and a testbed for this research. This 8th edition of the Forum pursued a new approach to promote international collaboration by developing official ties among three Universities from the Latin Network: the University of Bologna, the Tecnológico de Monterrey and the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

### 3. Collaborative Research Stories: The Case of the Latin Network for the Development of Design as a Process

The Latin Network for the Development of Design as a Process was founded in 2008, with the “Carta di Torino” Manifesto, on the occasion of the nomination of Turin as the first World Design Capital<sup>1</sup>. Since the beginning, the Network has been composed by a group of researchers, academics, and students of Latin language and culture who study and operate in a particular field of design known as design processes. This means that this scientific community has been focusing on investigating the methodologies, approaches and practices that are used to disseminate and develop design as culture in our society, addressing tangible and intangible environments. Still today, it counts around 60 members from 15 countries, representing more than 20 universities in Europe and North/Central/South America. Moreover, it gathers a network of more than 500 international contacts collected among the participants of the various editions of the International Forum of Design as a Process, about which we will discuss later, and other interested people from all over the world. Finally, it also has honorary members (designers, entrepreneurs and professors) invited as keynote speakers of the Forums<sup>2</sup>.

The idea of building a design network between Latin countries had strong geopolitical implications. At the beginning of the 2000s, European design scholars and practitioners started again to look at Latin America, and vice versa, in a sort of new wave of mutual interest (if we consider the first wave the one that emerged after World War II, when Latin America became fertile territory for experimentation due to the cultural exchange linked to migration flows of intellectuals and professionals, such as Tomas Maldonado). In the essay *Design, the Future and the Human Spirit* Victor Margolin (2007) wrote about the implications of geopolitical theories for the future of design, affirming that “One of the few designers to make reference to geopolitics is Gui Bonsiepe, who has written cogently about the centre-periphery model and its effect on designing in Latin America. Bonsiepe, for example, has refused to characterise Latin America as a peripheral region that must derive its ideas and models of design practice from the center. Rather, he has sought to empower Latin American designers by urging them to locate their practices within a revisionist geopolitical model that does not relegate their work to the margins of the transnational production and flow of goods and services” (p. 7). This important statement represents the almost silent but underpinned need for pluriversal approaches. The designer and theorist Gui Bonsiepe played a fundamental role

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<sup>1</sup> The title of World Design Capital was assigned by Icsid, the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, founded in 1957 and nowadays known as WDO, World Design Organization. Icsid has been one of the most important institutional representatives of the design community: for example, it coined the internationally and worldwide recognised definition of industrial design in 1959 and 2015.

<sup>2</sup> For an overall representation of the Network, see: <https://www.forumdesignprocess.org/dgdw22/past-editions/>. The community has grown during fifteen years, mobilising a huge number of international researchers around the world. Today, the reference institution of the Network is the University of Bologna in Italy (Advanced Design Unit, Department of Architecture).

in valorising Latin American design tradition, stressing the centre-periphery relation and recognising in design a discipline capable of producing knowledge, imagining, and shaping better futures. Thus, the first connotation of the Network implies a geo-political definition that moves in line with this perspective: the Latin vocation means to unify a territory in a cultural and political sense, trying to recognise common perspectives, tools, methods, and approaches, beyond the shared languages' origins<sup>3</sup>.

At the same time, this specific vocation came in a moment of great interest for design associationism. In 2008, the same year of the foundation of the Network, the first BID (Bienal Iberoamericana de Diseño) was organised: it was founded by DIMAD, an association of Spanish designers born in 2004, with the aim of representing the design evolution in Latin America, Portugal and Spain. A study about this phenomenon was done in the Network's first period of establishment (Formia & Peruccio, 2011), trying to demonstrate that the ferment in design associationism in Latin countries took with it the possibility of the birth of an "archipelago" of initiatives. Through quantitative and qualitative research, it illustrates the value of the few transnational associations that attempted to provide a network dimension, reclaiming the global community to share common paths of joint collaboration. This is the case of the Asociación Latinoamericana de Diseño (Aladi), founded in 1980 in Bogota, which unites entities in the territories of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela. Or the European case of the Bureau of European Design Associations (Beda), established in 1969 as the European representative body for professional designers' associations (Bureau of European Design Associations, s.d.). Thus, the possibility to link trans-Atlantic representatives took advantage of the great success of associationism, linking it to a more than national dimension.

The third important factor at the basis of the Network's birth is related to design education. The history of design education in Latin America has an established tradition compared to Latin European countries, such as Italy. An exhaustive picture has been returned by Argentine scholar Silvia Fernández, first in a 2006 article that appeared in *Design Issues* and then in the 2008 monograph *Historia del diseño en América Latina y el Caribe Industrialización y comunicación visual para la autonomía*, edited with Gui Bonsiepe. Tracing the origins, Fernández and Bonsiepe (2008) basically coincides with the onset of the industrial development policies of the 1960s. However, this pioneering process remained at the level of university studies. In these years (2008-2012), a few Latin American universities had PhD Courses and Programs in the design field (Formia, 2015): they were born in the 1990s in countries such as Mexico or Brazil or at the beginning of the 2010s in other contexts such as Colombia and Argentina. This means that, in that period, researchers and scholars interested in third-level education would need to study in other countries, especially Europe, creating a cross-fertilized movement of reciprocal enrichment.

Starting from these premises, the Latin Network has established, from the beginning of its experience, to be a group of people who benefit (and self-finance) from regular in-person meetings in a Forum that allows them to exchange, debate and discuss studies and experiences. The International Forum of Design as a Process is conceived as a thematic, international, specialised conference and takes place within one of the members' universities. It uses a call for proposals open to the worldwide community of scholars and researchers, in order to open the Network's dimensions to a wider range of contributions without specific geographical or linguistic limitations. By now, eight

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to specify that Latin countries includes both European (Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain) and American (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guyana, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela) countries. However, the Latin Network has opened its community to worldwide contributions through the Forums, in which the call for papers has no geographical or linguistic limitations.

Forums have been organised by the members. One of the main characteristics is the principle of the “legacy” left by each Forum. In every edition, the host university introduced an incremental aspect, with the idea of a common growth of the event, in order to share a recognisable format from a scientific and cultural point of view<sup>4</sup>.

These were the conditions of the mutual attractions that led to the origin of the Network. However, different phases characterised these fifteen years of work: after the first phase of great attraction, receptivity, openness and desire to internationalise the academic and cultural experiences based on the scientific revision of the processes and statutes of the two Latin continents, a second phase arrived in which autarky and nationalism prevailed, and perhaps the idea that everyone at home is better off managing the production of knowledge independently and without influence. Finally, the current phase in which this autarkic euphoria seems to have subsided, and the two continents have returned to looking at each other with respect and attraction. A selective attraction, which demands more constant relations and grand scientific equity. This influenced the choice of the 8th International Forum (2022) theme: critical thinking emerged about considering and articulating the specificities of new geographies of knowledge production in design. Thus the last Forum, as later explained, represented the occasion to re-think and update the Latin Network system of debating in the light of changing paradigms in knowledge production and sharing, including thematic (the chosen theme), methodological (the process underpinning the peer-review process of proposals; the criteria for selecting of speakers; the open access system for the valorisation of the publications) and organisational perspectives (partners involved; low registration fees). Most of all, the research background looks at the possibility of shifting the scientific assessment scale of design activities on the local and endemic scale in favour of development, economic growth, access to resources and funding. The Latin Network could facilitate the recognition of systemic diversity and thus inclusiveness; therefore, the hypothesis argues that a broader network prioritising local context and contents may be an effective approach towards a pluriversal recognition of scientific perspectives (Alvelos & Barreto, 2022).

## **4. A Reflection About Equity, Inclusion, and Research Access: The Case of the 8th International Forum of Design as a Process**

The 8<sup>th</sup> International Forum of Design as a Process – with the title “Disrupting Geographies in the Design World” - was held in Bologna in June 2022. It has been 15 years since the constitution of the “Carta di Torino” Manifesto and the foundation of the Latin Network for the Development of Design Processes (Celaschi, 2022). As previously explained, the Network aims to promote the culture of systems and processes from a pluriversal perspective compared to the mainstream culture of industrial production. This 8th edition of the Forum pursued a new approach to promote international collaboration by developing official ties among three Universities from the Latin Network: the University of Bologna, the Tecnológico de Monterrey and the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. This academic network has established an unprecedented systemic collaboration to open a debate on global challenges, by observing the main principles of Responsible Innovation (Bailey et al., 2016). The organisational approach (selection of topics as well as the keynote speakers) is the expression of this collaborative methodology. The main theme of the Forum was devoted to *Disrupting Geographies in the Design World*, aiming to collect reflections and investigations around

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<sup>4</sup> Some example of incremental legacy are: the presence of a call for paper (legacy of the first edition of the Forum), the choice of an open access journal, the *Strategic Design Research Journal*, as the main venue for scientific sharing (legacy of the second edition), the publication of the books of proceedings and the Design as a Process Award (legacy of the Third edition), the collaboration with research labs and center (legacy of the Fourth edition).

the research question of how might design principles and practices adapt their approaches to attend to the diversity that characterises the contemporary world. In order to provide possible answers, the Forum gathered analyses, experiences and elements in the different territories, to connect diverse cultural flows and their influence on the innovation pathways driven by design<sup>5</sup>.

The selection of keynote speakers followed the same pluralistic vision, inviting experts from South Africa, Mexico, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, United States, United Kingdom, etc<sup>6</sup>.

Five tracks within the conference addressed the different dimensions of a global design future:

- There's No Plan(et) B: Sustainable Transitions to Systemic Planet-Centric Design;
- Intersectional Design for an Accessible and Empowering World;
- Design and Responsive Technologies for Human Wellbeing;
- Design Values Out of the Mainstream: New Geographies of Influence;
- New Education Pathways for Future Designers in a Changing World.

The Forum has received more than 145 submissions, most of them from researchers affiliated with Universities in the Global South (Fig. 1); therefore, by inviting presenting authors from all over the world to the same table, the Forum aims to challenge the dominant hegemony in design (mainly European and North American perspectives). Furthermore, the Conference represents a concrete opportunity for researchers from the South to present their scientific contributions and be recognised by the community of the North. In this context, the evolution of the Latin Network facilitates a parallel approach in design research education that enables young researchers to navigate the Global North's academic systems and to share their knowledge and case studies.

Nevertheless, the research must point out that the call for long abstracts was developed on a traditional submission system based in Europe and therefore intrinsically biased; despite this, the process focused on specific factors of academic inclusion:

1. increase the publishing accessibility and visibility of early-career researchers (Master Students, PhD students, Post-Doc) from low-middle-income countries;
2. experimenting a new evaluation framework of the peer-review process of the long abstracts.



Figure 1. A geographical overview of the submissions received for the 8th International Forum of Design as a Process – titled “Disrupting Geographies in the Design World”.

<sup>5</sup> For a critical review of the conference themes, see the “Open Debate” section of the issue 77 of *diid* journal: <https://www.diid.it/diid/index.php/diid/issue/archive>

<sup>6</sup> List of key-note speakers and guest: <https://www.forumdesignprocess.org/dgdw22/keynote-speakers/>

By reviewing the outputs of the 8th Forum, we will focus on demonstrating the need to increase the number of discussion spaces devoted to early-career researchers from low-middle-income countries (LMIC) as defined by the World Bank (2023). In fact, researchers in LMICs still struggle to publish in reputable international journals or conferences due to poor results from editorial and peer review processes, which often lack cultural knowledge or local contextualisation, resulting in a hierarchy of scientific values from high-income countries over LMIC (Kieć, 2017; Nicholas et al., 2017). Early-career researchers do not have in-depth knowledge of the publishing system works, and the lack of publishing literacy is increasingly pushing them to publish in “predatory journals” (Trotter et al., 2014; Mouton and Valentine, 2017). Considering that rejection rates of most high-impact factor journals remain high, publishers might need to be more flexible in terms of acceptability, especially for authors in LMIC, to allow for a more diverse, inclusive, open research impact.

In this context, the editorial and double-blind peer-review process -managed by the editorial board of the Italian scientific journal *diid.disegno industrial industrial design*- of the abstracts submitted to the 8th International Forum was based on an empirical methodology of evaluation that prioritised the valorisation of local knowledge, endemic design, community-led projects, design participation and co-creation, responsible innovation, social justice, ecocentrism. The Forum involved speakers from the Global Design community, extending the original vocation of the Latin cultures to researchers and designers of the Mediterranean Area, Middle East, IOR (Indian Ocean Region), and Global South regions, with the aim of sharing new perspectives on how to design futures in a responsible and just perspective, at the forefront of change, building strategic partnerships, creating accessible knowledge. The Editorial Board acknowledged the Forum as a publishing space for non-English native speakers who are rich in research content, inviting reviewers to evaluate the submissions based on research content relevance, beside traditional methodological approaches of scientific review, and avoiding penalising the authors for grammar mistakes.

**Number of applications submitted per track:**

- Track 1 - 25 submissions**  
There's No Plan(et) B: Sustainable Transitions to Systemic Planet-Centric Design
- Track 2 - 30 submissions**  
Intersectional Design for an Accessible and Empowering World
- Track 3 - 19 submissions**  
Design and Responsive Technologies for Human Wellbeing
- Track 4 - 19 submissions**  
Design Values out of the Mainstream: New Geographies of Influence
- Track 5 - 45 submissions**  
New Education Pathways for Future Designers in a Changing World

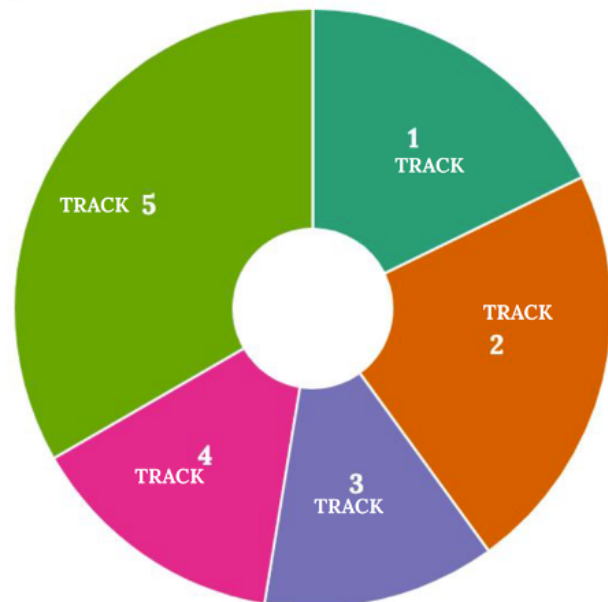


Figure 2. Overview of the number of applications per Track.

The peer-review process resulted in a 90% acceptance rate of abstracts submitted and total acceptance of full papers submitted for publication based on the evaluation criteria mentioned above; considering the number of early-career researchers in the Forum (Fig. 3), these results of the review process are encouraging. Increasing accessibility to international research venues might be a solution to address inequality in research, as it remains a critical factor for the academic growth of



LMIC researchers; conferences such as the International Forum of Design as a Process, become important opportunities to see their research published in indexed journals, among authors from all over the world. In line with this goal, the Conference involved young researchers in a very central role in the organisational activities; the early-career researchers of the Advanced Design Unit of the University of Bologna were fully engaged in the backstage of the Forum enabling a learning experience based on empirical training. The same opportunity was provided to the presenting young researchers from developing countries, where the low registration fees for early-stage career researchers (Master Students, PhD students, post-Doc) and the hybrid mode of the Conference aimed at reducing the inequality and accessibility gap caused by economic issues.

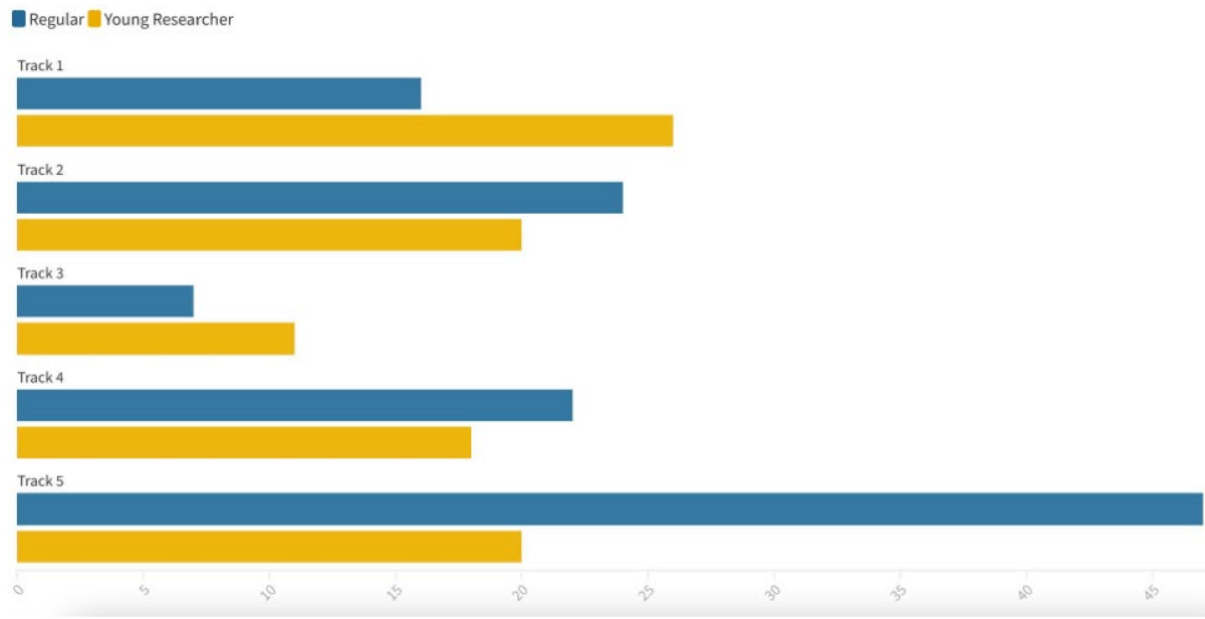


Figure 3. Overview of the authors based on their career stage.

## 4. Conclusions and Future Research Directions

The present article has addressed the need to increase access and visibility to researchers from LMICs through new collaborative methodologies that tie international conferences to publishing venues and to update the traditional framework of peer-review processes based on Western-centric values, by opening a discussion on the concept of excellence. In order to question the fanatical fixation on scientific excellence (Friesike & Lupo, 2022), new ways to assess the quality of scientific writings have been promoted: reputation (Gandini, 2016; Fecher et al., 2017) and merit, avoiding relying only on metrics (Declaration of Research Assessment - DORA, 2021).

The 8th International Forum Design as a Process represents a testbed for this new experimentation of community-led knowledge targeting the Latin Network and Global South countries. In the early part of the discussion, we presented a geopolitical analysis of the global knowledge ecosystem affected by ethnocentrism and proposed vernacular knowledge and endogenous design as potential solutions to subvert the current Western hegemony.

Since 2008, the Latin Network has aimed at disseminating and developing design as culture in our society, addressing tangible and intangible environments covering the Latin American area and the global south in general; this model of networked perspective offers a new frame of knowledge accessibility.

The analysis conducted on the 8th Forum statistical data shows that a more flexible evaluation framework of submissions based on the valorisation of local knowledge, endemic design,

community-led projects, design participation and co-creation has allowed more than 90 early-stage career researchers from 11 countries of the Global South to present and publish their research.

Nevertheless, we are aware that the evaluation framework proposed by the 8th Forum is a tentative initiative to propose new assessment hierarchies based on different values such as innovation, cross-disciplinarity and participation in relation to the application context, rather than a traditional one; therefore, yet to be fully tested in a systemised, scaled and replicable manner in order to embrace a real pluriverse perspective. Yet, the core value of the Latin Network is *design as a process*, and within this statement of practice, the research will continue to seek unconventional academic publishing perspectives in the next Forum in 2024.

With the above in mind, the present research points towards strengthening LMIC/GS knowledge leadership, creating an environment where sharing knowledge and work collaboratively by:

- use design practice to prototype new editorial workflows based on open-access models linked to international conferences to increase publishing opportunities for LMIC researchers;
- strengthen international collaboration to address imbalances in research cooperation with high-income countries, as it is a frequent criticism that research partners from high-income countries frequently maintain control over research projects;
- implement platforms of knowledge sharing, intended as outcomes of collaborative forms of research open to a new generation of thinkers and makers;
- establish a new assessment framework, increasing rigour and relevance based on a pluriverse perspective.

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