

Fieldwork in History: use of bibliometrics

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Abstract

The current paper will concentrate on results delivered in the History field from ISI Web of Knowledge Arts and Humanities Citation Index. The author tries to answer to following questions: a) Are authors from English speaking countries more cited than from non-English countries? b) Does each country have different criteria in the choice of collaboration partner? c) Is there concurrency in the titles of journals between countries? d) What types of documents are preferred?

1. Introduction

The first steps in the creation of the Reference Index in Humanities at the European level have created several discussions among European Humanities researchers. The Humanities in Europe are recognised for their influences on the language, culture and history of different European countries. Such research has had a distinct national focus, and there has been relatively little collaboration across national boundaries.

It is a common belief that the database produced by the ISI Web of Knowledge Arts and Humanities Citation Index (=AHCI), in contrast to the SCI used for Natural Sciences, is not answering the needs of European research in the field of Humanities. [1] An even more comprehensive survey, made by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in 2004 showed that the database does not adequately cover journals from countries other than the UK, the US, the Russian Federation, the Netherlands and Switzerland. [2]

When starting a sizeable work (which the creation of a European reference database of the Humanities certainly is) it is good idea to make analyses and calculations on this ground and with those data that are available. Definitely Thomson ISI AH SCI database, in spite of its disadvantage, make possible to carry out a number of large-scale bibliometric analysis. Knowing the limitations, it is good bases for groundwork.

The current paper will concentrate on results delivered from the History field.

Posed questions:

1. Are authors from English speaking countries more cited than from non-English countries?
2. Are there differences between countries in choice of collaboration partner?
3. Is there concurrency in the titles of journals between countries?
4. What types of documents are preferred?

2. *Methods*

Searchers from ISI Web of Knowledge AHCI for period 1990-2000 by subject fields “histor*”, “archaeol*”, “archeol*”, “ethnol*” and country field (33 European countries) were made. Following data were gathered: number of papers, number of citations, number of papers with one author, number of papers with less than five authors, number of papers more than five authors, list of source titles by country, list of document types by country, list of authors from different countries by source titles. In total 16,817 papers were analyzed.

3. *Findings*

3.1. *Are authors from English speaking countries more cited than from non-English countries?*

Of the total amount of papers published by 33 countries in AHCI during the stated period, 9.8% belonged to the History field. More than half (53.7%) of these papers were published by English speaking countries. At the same time and regardless of the country of origin, received data show that the majority of papers were not cited.

Table 1. Citedness of History papers (1990-2000)

Country	Papers	Cited papers	Citedness %
Austria	234	41	17.5
Belgium	202	48	23.8
Bulgaria	29	4	13.8
Croatia	18	7	38.9
Czech	74	15	20.3
Denmark	151	36	23.8
England	7384	1301	17.6
Estonia	8	1	12.5
Finland	71	20	28.2
France	1420	316	22.4

Germany	2768	603	21.8
Greece	51	22	43.1
Hungary	51	8	15.7
Iceland	7	3	42.9
Ireland	367	70	19.1
Italy	441	104	23.6
Latvia	3	1	33.3
Lithuania	2	0	0
Netherlands	520	180	34.6
North Ireland	138	27	19.6
Norway	167	44	26.4
Poland	95	19	20
Portugal	260	38	14.66
Romania	14	2	14.3
Russia	377	47	12.5
Scotland	766	102	13.36
Slovakia	168	30	17.9
Slovenia	7	0	0
Spain	527	113	21.4
Sweden	149	47	31.5
Switzerland	196	51	26
Turkey	24	12	50
Wales	368	86	23.4
Total/Average	17057	3398	19.9

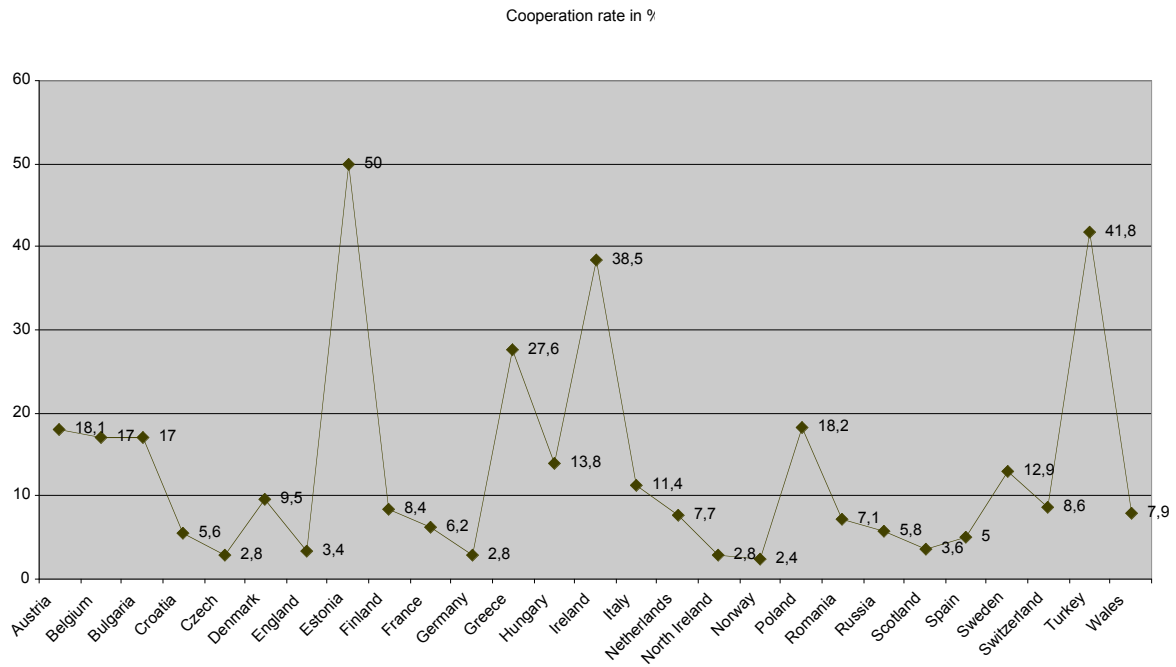
It means that authors from English speaking countries do not have a wider audience than non-English authors, more likely it was contrary. Average citedness was 19.9% and in the case of the English-speaking countries it was North Ireland (19.6%); England (17.6%); Ireland (19.1%) and Scotland (13.3%).

3.2. *Are there differences between countries in choice of collaboration partner?*

The majority of work in the History field is still by individuals – on average 89% of papers are published by one author. At the same time there are indications for future implications. Human genetics are forcefully entering the field. The methods used by hard sciences are applied by archaeologists. This means that results will be achieved via collaborative work and with a bigger number of co-authors.

1,876 or 11% of the papers were published in collaboration with authors from different countries. This list was rather scattered. As History research is very much influenced by the common sphere we expected more cooperation between countries which are historically and culturally linked. In fact we find this only the case in Ireland and North Ireland (38% of Irish papers were published with collaboration with authors from North Ireland). In some instances the double affiliation of places of one author was shown, not the existent of different authors. Predominantly the most favorable co-operation partners were those from U.K. (18 out of 33 countries) and from U.S. (22 out of 33 countries).

Figure1



3.3. *Is there concurrency in the titles of journals between countries?*

When collaboration is not influenced by geographical, historical and cultural links; then, as in the case of journals it is different. Scandinavian, English and German speaking countries use the same journals to publish their results. On average 11% of journals create a core in which half of all the papers are published.

Table 2. The total number of journal titles and number of journal titles in which 50% of papers were published

Country	Journal titles	No and % of titles in which 50% papers were published	
Austria	92	10	10.9
Belgium	99	12	12.1
Bulgaria	13	1	7.7
Croatia	10	3	30
Czech	22	2	9.1
England	367	22	6.0
Estonia	6	2	33.3
Finland	45	9	20
France	323	16	4.0

Germany	277	14	5.12
Greece	34	9	26.5
Hungary	34	9	26.5
Ireland	140	16	11.4
Italy	199	31	15.6
Netherlands	242	41	16.9
North Ireland	78	17	21.87
Norway	51	1	2.0
Poland	58	11	19.0
Romania	13	6	46.2
Russia	64	2	3.1
Scotland	189	12	6.3
Slovakia	9	1	11.1
Spain	119	4	3.4
Switzerland	133	37	27.8
Turkey	18	7	38.9
Wales	145	19	13.1

A characteristic common to all countries is the preference given to the journals published in the listed country or neighboring country. For example 55.1% papers from Norway were published in *Historisk Tidsskrift*; 58.6% of Bulgarian papers in *Bulgarian Historical Review*; 75.6% of Slovak papers in the Czech journal *Historicky Casopis*. Journals, which belonged to the top five list in the selected countries were all locally oriented (more than 70% of authors belonged to the same or neighboring country where the journal was published).

3.4. What types of documents are preferred?

The everlasting discussion in the studies of research performance evaluation is what type of publications are “countable”. The situation in Humanities is even more complicated. Up till now there are no citation databases which include monographs. In the History field, references to archival sources constitute a major part of all references.

There exists in AHCI a wide variety of type of publication (articles, book reviews, editorials, bibliographies, items about individual, notes, biographies, meeting abstracts, software, letters, discussions, art exhibits, reprints, news items, chronologies, fiction, correction, and poetry).

The focus of this current survey was on articles and book reviews. Simultaneously we followed the distinction between English speaking and non English speaking countries. The dominant share of publications in the former, were book reviews.

Table 3. Papers by type (in %)

Country	Article	Book Review	Other
Austria	53.4	37.6	9
Belgium	61.4	27.7	10.9
Bulgaria	93.1	3.4	3.5
Croatia	88.9	5.6	5.5
Czech	78.4	13.5	8.1
Denmark	41.1	49.7	9.2
England	22.4	71.6	6
Estonia	50	37.5	12.5
Finland	43.7	49.3	7
France	67.4	24.4	8.2
Germany	47.2	43.4	9.4
Greece	47.1	37.3	15.6
Hungary	72.5	23.5	4
Iceland	85.7	14.3	0
Ireland	31.3	60.8	7.9
Italy	57.1	35.1	7.8
Latvia	100 ⁰		0
Lithuania	1000		0
Netherlands	55	37.3	7.7
North Ireland	31.9	62.3	5.8
Norway	45.5	44.9	9.6
Poland	56.8	37.9	5.3
Romania	85.7	7.1	7.2
Russia	63.9	21	15.1
Scotland	18	75.7	6.3
Slovakia	91.7	6	2.3
Slovenia	71.4	28.6	0
Spain	72.2	17.8	10
Sweden	53.7	39.6	6.7
Switzerland	59.7	30.1	10.2
Turkey	62.5	20.8	16.7
Wales	31.5	62	6.5

4. *Conclusions*

Performance in the History field is still an individual activity. At the same time we can follow tendencies which may cause changes in the whole area - new technologies used in research, even other research areas are becoming entrenched in the field.

Despite the country or origin, citedness in the History field is low. We have to remember the specifics of the field. While the studies published in the field of Sciences will, after a period of ten years be interesting only for historians of science, in Humanities studies are never forgotten – even studies that have been used very little can become referrable again with the re-actualisation of the respective subject. Creating Reference

databases in Humanities we have to take into account the fact that references in Humanities are independent objects of research.

We did not find a core group of journals in the History field which matches all countries. There are however core journals in separate countries. We should be very cautious about drawing conclusions, especially in case of small countries with a limited number of papers. It seems that historical and cultural connections played the biggest role in the choice of journals. Therefore the decision that every country will propose lists of journals, made by the working group for European Reference Index, was right.

In counting Humanities researchers' output, decision makers have to consider that besides books, and research articles there exists a wide range of type of publications, all of which are important. In the case of History, book reviews are among the most important ones.

References

1. Moed H. F, Luwei M, Nederhof A. J. Towards research performance in the humanities. LIBRARY TRENDS 50 (3): 498-520 WIN 2002.
2. Archambault É., Gagné É. V. The Use of Bibliometrics in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Prepared for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. August 2004. 72pp.