

POLISH SOCIOLOGY CITATION INDEX (PRINCIPLES FOR CREATION AND THE FIRST RESULTS)

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The author discusses inefficiencies of Garfield's *Social Sciences Citation Index* to measure quality of a discipline in a national context. She proposes an alternative measurement tool to the Garfield's index. The example of sociology was selected; an index of Polish sociology was created and data from it was compared with data retrieved from the SSCI. The two sets were compared to show greater "sensitivity" of the locally created index.

More and more often scholars are required to document their scientific achievements by providing the number of citations to their published works. Currently the only sources of such information are Garfield's citation indices, the *Science Citation Index* (SCI), *Social Science Citation Index* (SSCI) and *Arts&Humanities Citation Index* (A&HCI)

These sources, with the possible exception of the SCI, are quite unreliable for the assessment of Polish scientific production. This is especially visible in the case of social sciences and humanities. The causes for this situation are as follows:

1.) Social sciences and humanities have, to a high degree, a local character. This local character does not mean provincialism; it has cultural dimensions. Hard core sciences have universal dimensions, while for social sciences it is their local role that is most significant. They play important culture-creating functions, usually only for their own national groups.

2.) In the SSCI and A&HCI, among cited journals, English language periodicals predominate, usually American. This adds to the real supremacy of those journals. Over 80% of all citations in the SSCI journals are published in the English language, the majority American.¹ There is no doubt that sociological literature in the English language comprises the majority of the world production in this discipline. One cannot, however, agree with a statement that only 20% of literature in languages other than English deserves attention (citing). During the '80s, the A&HCI included

citations to 473 American, 141 English, 93 German and ...3 Polish journals.² The SSCI does not include any Polish sociological journals except for the sporadic inclusion of the *Polish Sociological Bulletin*. The PSB was cited in the last 15 years only 71 times.

3.) Both the SSCI and A&HCI are constructed analogically to SCI – they take into consideration only journal articles, thereby providing a picture of the disciplines that is quite fragmented. In social sciences and humanities the basic mean of communication is still a monograph, in contrast to hard core sciences where scholars communicate by means of a journal paper or report.

I am not alone in my criticism of Garfield's citation indices for social sciences and humanities. Work replacing the American indices with local databases is conducted in various European countries. For instance, at the University of Amsterdam, Holland, an attempt to measure the influence of Dutch sociologists was undertaken by counting citations from Dutch journals not represented in the SSCI.³ During the recent European Conference on the Provision and Information Needs of Social Science Scholars (Berlin, 11-13 November 1994) the American bias of main information sources was criticised. Sociologists from Central and East European countries complained that there is no information or even interest from the West about their research activities. West European scholars criticised the poor information regarding their research, and following that, the lack of bibliographic notes and citations in core international (dominated by the Americans) information sources (including SSCI).⁴

The conclusion that the SSCI has limited value for measuring the quality of Polish sociology literature is confirmed by the analysis of the citation index for Polish sociology, created at the Sociology Department of the Nicholas Copernicus University in Torun, Poland. This index consist of a list of cited authors, their institutional affiliation, together with the full bibliographic description of their works cited in four leading Polish sociological journals. These journals are as follows: *Studia Socjologiczne* (Studies in Sociology), *Przegląd Socjologiczny* (Sociological Review), *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* (Culture and Society) and *Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny* (Legal, Economic, and Sociological Studies) from 1956 to 1988. Incidentally, non of these journals were present (neither as journals citing nor journals cited) in the SSCI in the years 1980-1988. The index was created using the CDS/ISIS software, one of the most popular data base packages in Poland in late 1980s (it was developed and disseminated free of charge by the UNESCO to scholars in Eastern Europe). The data base includes citations to monographs, articles,

unpublished materials (such as dissertations and reports), communications from research and other scholarly works. The following types of materials published in the four journals were omitted: enlightenment works, memoirs, diaries, legal documents and sources. Self-citations were also omitted.

The index supplements Garfield's work in assessing the status and the directions of development of Polish sociology. Currently it includes slightly over 21 thousand records. The index will be updated and made available through the Internet. It will be used for the scientometric research aiding our scientific policy by assessing the development of the discipline and scientific institutions. It is also hoped that the index will make information about achievements of Polish sociology readily available. The analysis of the index created at the Sociology Department of the NCU gives a much broader and deeper picture of the Polish sociology in comparison to SSCI.

Citation indices objectify assessment of a scientific work, a journal, a scholar, a scientific school, a scholarly institution or a discipline of a given country. Criteria for the assessment are the degree of usage, impact, and influence. How can this status be measured while using SSCI and *Polish Sociology Citation Index* (PSCI)?

In my analysis I gathered names of all Polish sociologists with at least a *habitation* degree. This group comprised more than 300 people listed in the *Informator Nauki Polskiej* (the Directory of Polish Science), 1993 ed. and classified as "sociologists". I checked all the names against the SSCI and PSCI for the years between 1980 and 1988 and I counted the citations they received in both indices.

Of the two possibilities, the PSCI turns out to be a much more "sensitive" measurement tool. For instance only every fourth sociologist was not represented in the PSCI, while in the SSCI I found references to only the top 10% of Polish sociologists. See Table 1. The analysis of the Table 1 shows that on the top of the SSCI list there are Polish sociologists who either specialise in such universal sub discipline as methodology (e.g. S. Nowak and P. Sztompka), at certain point of their lives moved abroad and published in English (e.g. F. Znaniecki and B. Galeski) or specialise in Marxist sociology (e.g. W. Wesolowski and J.J. Wiatr). A Kłosowska who ranked the highest in the PSCI and did not place in the first 10 of the SSCI does her work on locally oriented topics.

It is true that most names in the SSCI also received the most citations in the PSCI, however, one can conclude that PSCI allows for more in-depth analysis of the phenomena taking place in Polish sociology (SSCI shows only "the tip of the iceberg" of the discipline in Poland). Let me give just two examples. SSCI allows us to compare the status of such scientific centres as the Sociology Institute of Warsaw

University with the Institute of Sociology and Philosophy at the Polish Academy of Sciences; it does not allow for the comparison of such centres as the Sociology Department at Gdańsk University and the Sociology Department of the Kraków Teachers' College (see Table 2).

Table 1
 Ranking list of Polish sociologists cited between 1980 and 1988:
 Spearman's rank-difference correlation coefficient
 ($r=0.879$, p of 0.01)

SSCI	No. of citations	PSCI	No. of citations
S. Nowak	117	A. Kloskowska	197
J. Szczepanski	91	J. Szczepanski	169
F. Znaniecki(w/out W.I. Thomas)	91	S. Ossowski	147
W. Wesolowski	87	W. Wesolowski	122
S. Ossowski	73	F. Znaniecki (with W.I. Thomas)	115
J.J. Wiatr	71	S. Nowak	109
B. Galeski	46	J. Chalasinski	96
P. Sztompka	36	K.M. Sfmczynski	93
J. Szacki	32	J. Szacki	66
J. Chalasinski	29	J.J. Wiatr	64

Table 2
 Ranking list of citations received by Polish sociologists according
 to the geographic location of their institutional affiliation (based on the PSCI)

Location	No. of citations received
Outside Poland including	7771 4685 citations of authors based in the USA
In Poland	13526
including: Warszawa	8007
Lódz	1406
Poznan	1151
Kraków	886
Wroclaw	349
Lublin	313
Katowice	125
Torun	122
Gdansk	73
Szczecin	58
Opole	46
Rzeszów	34

Only the PSCI permits one to note that local sociological journals published at universities, usually under the name *Zeszyty Naukowe...*, play a very minimal role in life of the community on the national level. This is also true in respect to publications issued by "good" universities and schools. This is illustrated in Table 3.

Evaluating scientists based on the degree to which their publications are used undoubtedly is one of the more effective quantitative ways for measuring their performance. I think, however, that it cannot be done for social sciences and humanities of non-English speaking countries using data from the SSCI and A&HCI alone.⁵ It is necessary to create national citation indices for "softer" sciences, and further work on developing alternative tools is needed.

Table 3
Ranking list of the most frequently cited journals from 1957 to 1988 (based on PSCI).

Title	Rank	No. of citations
Studia Socjologiczne	1	1137
Kultura i Społeczeństwo	2	443
Przegląd Socjologiczny	3	350
American Sociological Review	4	345
American Journal of Sociology	5	256
Studia Filozoficzne	6	152
Wies Współczesna	7	110
Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny	8	82
British Journal of Sociology	9	78
Social Forces	10	68
Zeszyty Naukowe KUL	120	10
Zeszyty Naukowe UJ	181	6
Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego	203	5

References

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3. R. HAGENDIJK, A.A.M. PRINS, Referenties en reverences, *Mens en Maatschappij*, 59 (1984) 226-250.
4. H.CH. HOBHOM, "Sharing Resources in European Social Sciences Information: the ESIS Project". The paper was given at the conference Social Science Information Needs and Provision in a Changing Europe in Berlin on 11-13 November 1994.
5. Interesting research can be done by comparing SSCI and PSCI. For instance, it was discovered that between 1980 and 1989 world sociologists cited Marx and Engels relatively more often than Polish sociologists.