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July, 1989

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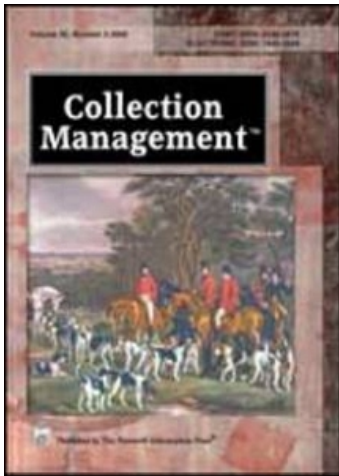
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Collection Management

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title-content=t792303985>

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Online Publication Date: 14 July 1989

To cite this Article McGinty, Stephen(1989)'Political Science Publishers',Collection Management,11:3,93 — 101

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1300/J105v11n03_05

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J105v11n03_05

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Political Science Publishers: What Do the Citations Reveal?

Stephen McGinty

ABSTRACT. This study investigates political science monograph publishing patterns through an examination of journal citations. All citations to monographs in the *American Political Science Review* and the *Journal of Politics* for 1974-1975 and 1984-1985 were tallied and categorized. Lists of the most frequently cited publishers for both time periods are presented. Citation frequencies of conference proceedings, unpublished sources, foreign language material, and government documents are explored. Centralization of resource use by scholars is examined by looking at what percentage of all monograph citations are accounted for by the twenty-five most active publishers. The results depict a significant amount of change over time in nearly all areas of political science publishing. The documented increase in the use of what might be called "nontraditional" publishing sources is an important factor in collection development undertakings. Suggestions for further study are offered.

INTRODUCTION

Library literature has produced an explosion of citation studies in recent years. These studies have examined a variety of factors in virtually all academic disciplines. Shelf life, frequency of use, citation scatter, and foreign language use have all been probed.¹ The field of political science is no exception. Articles looking at the literature of political science appear with great regularity.² In spite of this trend, very few articles can be found regarding monographs, and fewer still that discuss publishers.³

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This study attempts to bring a simple citation analysis to the area of political science monograph publishing. Many times an elaborate mathematical analysis confounds many readers as it enlightens. It is considered that this study will be most useful to librarians at small and medium sized institutions. Budget limitations at these schools can hamper the ability of the staff to keep current on publishing trends and scholar preferences. In the absence of subject bibliographers, acquisitions decisions may be made without a deep understanding of what material will be most useful to the scholar.

The traditional caveats regarding both the philosophical and the mathematical limitations inherent in such an undertaking⁴ apply. Such limitations are apparent in this case, where size of publishing house will go a long way towards determining results. Publishers that provide a small number of highly respected titles will not fare well in this sampling. The idea of determining the value of a book from the nature of its scholarly use is a philosophical question that deserves debate. However, this is beyond the scope of the present analysis.

Specific statistical procedures in libraries have to be maintained. College libraries in particular must answer to two important groups. School administrators want to know exactly what the library is doing for the school. The faculty wants to know if the library can meet its research and teaching needs. Quantitative profiles of certain library activities can answer many of the questions these groups may have. In this time of budget cuts, size limitations, declining enrollments, and ill-defined library programs, precision measurement has entered library decision-making. Reliance upon intuitive procedures alone is not enough to maintain a collection that will reflect what is valuable to the users.⁵

METHOD

All 7166 monograph citations were counted in the *Journal of Politics* and the *American Political Science Review*⁶ for the years 1974-1975 and 1984-1985. Citations were placed in one of the following categories: English language material, foreign language material, dissertations and other unpublished material, and conference proceedings and papers. Specific English language publishers were

recorded and tallied. A sum total was maintained for the other categories. The ten-year span was chosen as a guidepost in that it indicates important trends over an extended period of time. Two-year samples from each publication give a broad picture of what is happening and serve to reduce distortion of the results by use of a relatively small number of sources.

The two publications were chosen for the esteem in which they are held by the political science community. Periodicals dealing with specific subsets of political science studies, such as comparative politics and political economy, were excluded.⁷ Investigation of these subsets may prove a fruitful area for future research. In keeping with the theme of limited resources and, by inference, limited curriculum, periodicals with a general overview of the discipline were studied.

RESULTS

The citation totals for the most highly ranked publishers are listed in Tables One and Two. Table One shows the results of the tally for both periodicals in 1974 and 1975. In Table Two, the results from 1984 and 1985 are presented.

These figures show a strong degree of volatility. In the ten years, seventeen of the most active twenty-five publishers have changed position by three places or more. Sage Publications and Cambridge University Press do not appear in Table One, yet they are near the very top in Table Two. Crowell Press, Yale University Press, Princeton University Press, and Basic Books all show substantial increases in the number of citations credited to them. By contrast, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Oxford University Press, Knopf, and The Free Press (NY) show significant decreases. Random House, Doubleday, The Free Press (Illinois), and Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich all drop from Table Two.

Perhaps the most striking result is the position of Government Printing Office (G.P.O.) publications. Table One puts the G.P.O. in first place. The G.P.O.'s ranking, however, slips twelve places in Table Two. This represents the most statistically significant decrease in the entire table. Political events in Washington during this time period may account in part for so large a change. An inquiry

TABLE ONE. Publisher rankings from monograph citations in the *Journal of Politics* and *American Political Science Review*, 1974-75.

Rank	Name	Citations
1.	G.P.O.	179
2.	Wiley	166
3.	Free Press (NY)	154
4.	Oxford Univ. Press	140
5.	Harper & Row	137
6.	Yale Univ. Press	117
7.	Princeton Univ. Press	98
8.	Univ. of Chicago Press	97
9.tie	Harvard Univ. Press	93
	Little, Brown & Co.	93
11.tie	Macmillan	92
	Prentice Hall	92
13.	Rand McNally	85
14.	Knopf	69
15.	Holt, Rinehart & Winston	61
16.	Random House	53
17.	McGraw-Hill	52
18.	Doubleday	51
19.	Univ. of Calif. Press	50
20.	Harcourt, Brace, Jovan.	48
21.	Free Press (Illinois)	45
22.	Praeger	42
23.	W.W. Norton	41
24.	Brookings Institute	39
25.	Basic Books	36

into G.P.O. policy and funding is outside the purview of this study. Further inquiry by government documents librarians could be enlightening.

The results shown in Table Three may be indicative of future trends. The "nontraditional" monograph sources all posted increases. The greatest numerical jump involves the literature from conference proceedings and papers. In fact, if placed in Table Two with publisher rankings, this category would be in first position. The "hard sciences" have for years relied upon informal channels of communication.⁸ The results shown here indicate that political

TABLE TWO. Publisher rankings from monograph citations in the *Journal of Politics* and the *American Political Science Review*, 1984-85.

Rank	Name	Citations
1.	Yale Univ. Press	189
2.tie	Princeton Univ. Press	145
	Wiley	145
4.	Sage Publications	135
5.	Harvard Univ. Press	126
6.tie	Little, Brown, & Co.	123
	Cambridge Univ. Press	123
8.	Univ. of Chicago Press	122
9.	Harper Row	110
10.	Free Press (NY)	96
11.	Prentice Hall	90
12.tie	Oxford Univ. Press	87
	G.P.O.	87
14.	Macmillan	83
15.	Rand McNally	75
16.	Univ. of Calif. Press	71
17.	Basic Books	70
18.	McGraw-Hill	53
19.tie	Crowell	45
	Praeger	45
21.	W.W. Norton	44
22.	Knopf	42
23.	St. Martin's Press	40
24.	Brookings Institute	39
25.	Holt, Rinehart & Winston	36

scientists may be changing the way in which their ideas are exchanged. The nearly exclusive reliance on monographs and periodicals as arenas of intellectual communication may be breaking down. These figures show the percentage of citations from conference proceedings and presented papers has more than doubled in the ten-year period under study. It is ironic that in a time of exacting bibliographic control and information technology, one in which all manner of expertise is engaged in compiling the record of research, an increase in scholarly communication is occurring through more

TABLE THREE. Percentage characteristics of cited monographs.

Type	1974-1975	1984-1985
Foreign language	4.6%	5.1%
Dissertations and other unpublished material	2.6%	4.4%
Conference Proceedings and papers	2.3%	7.3%
G.P.O. publications	4.5%	2.7%
Share of total citations held by the top 25	53.8 %	69.2%

informal channels. Conference proceedings and papers do not lend themselves to precise bibliographic control.

Despite the more or less domestic orientation of the two periodicals, foreign language monograph use is shown on the increase. The editorial policies of each periodical have a strong bearing on the presence of literature dealing with comparative politics. Periodicals dealing with regional or world affairs were excluded from this study. As for foreign language trends among scholars, these can only be adduced from the two periodicals with caution.

The last item in Table Three reveals a significant shift, the implications of which may require further investigation. This ten-year period has brought a large increase in the percentage of citations in the twenty-five most highly ranked publishers. The figure has grown from slightly over 50% in 1974-1975 to more than 69% in 1984-1985. For those who champion intellectual diversity, this is not a healthy trend. The bulk of the scholarly load is being carried by a handful of publishers, and a few publishing houses are being relied upon to the exclusion of the smaller presses. On one side, there is an increase in the use of "nontraditional" channels of intellectual communication, as seen in the growing number of conference proceedings and papers; on the other, increased reliance upon major publishers as sources of information further diminishes the standing of small publishers. Concentration and consolidation of

resources may limit the casting of a wide scholarly net. Perhaps political scientists can take a closer look at this phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

This study serves three purposes: first, it can be used as a guide to librarians with limited resources and staff in making decisions about where to allocate collection development funds; second, it indicates how political science scholars operate and what kinds of material are important to them; and third, it presents a model that might be followed in pursuing similar research in other disciplines.

On a less practical level, it is interesting to note the following: What changes take place over time? Do perceptions equal the facts about what publishers are cited most frequently? How rapidly do changes occur? How do outside forces such as government spending and corporate mergers affect scholarly publishing? Is centralization of publishing a concern? Some of the answers to these questions have been found. Other questions are fertile ground for continued study. For libraries without subject bibliographers, collection decisions can be difficult. Questions persist regarding the primary responsibility of the librarian/selector. Which function should be paramount, the evaluation of books or the evaluation of a selection method?⁹ For many overworked acquisitions librarians, simply learning what they can about each subject area occupies an inordinate amount of time. Studies that indicate where scholars go for information can help the library communicate effectively with the faculty/scholar.

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