Off the Wall

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A Circus of Citations

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In many so-called "hard" sciences individual and departmental reputations are based on the number of citations authors receive (usually, but not always) within the last five years. In the past the source for these numbers was the Science Citation Index, but with the advent of the Web there are many more indexes available. In any event, to be polite, this is mushy data. Nonetheless, the results are very influential in these disciplines and are greatly influential on promotion, tenure (if academics), and the awarding of grants and prizes.

The closest thing disability studies has to the Science Citation Index is the *Handbook of Disability Studies*, edited by Gary Albrecht, Katherine Seelman, and Michael Bury (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001). It is a remarkable book. It weighs about four pounds and has 852 pages. Some of the chapters are good, some are questionable, but without a doubt it is the place to start in the study of disability studies and research in the field. It is also the source of data for this article.

First, however, a disclaimer. The following can be seen as meaningless, but it is fun and it is certainly "off the wall." At the same time it may have some long term meaning.

The data presented below is from the author index of the *Handbook of Disability Studies*. Only those authors cited six or more times are listed. For the purposes of this study these authors are considered to be the most eminent in the field. The cut off point of six citations is a culturally acceptable one because it is one more than a common number of five. The fact that the author of this study made the list with six citations had absolutely no influence in the choice of the cut off point.

A few methodological comments are in order. If in the compilation of citations I have made a mistake, please let me know, but there is little that I can do about it except to publish a correction. The last names in the author index have only initials and the differences in one or more initials depended on the citation style and topic of the chapter. Nevertheless, where the same person was listed with different

initials (such as K. or K.F. Schriner) and it was clear that it was the same person, the citations were added together.

The total number of authors cited six or more times is 91. Of these authors 51% are men, 26% are women, and the gender of 24% could not be determined on the basis of the data available. Using the usual rules of attribution in such cases, the number of men receiving six or more citations was approximately twice the number of women. At the same time, of the 49 contributors to the volumes, 65% were cited six or more times.

There is a curious omission in the *Handbook of Disability Studies*. None of the journals in the field - Disability Studies Quarterly, Disability & Society, Disability & Rehabilitation, and the Journal of Disability Policy Studies - are mentioned according to the subject index. While this present study is intended to be a first attempt to establish a pecking order based on prominence in the field, perhaps the editors and authors of the *Handbook of Disability Studies* felt none of the journals merited mention even in the institutional and historical chapters. Or maybe it was just a simple oversight.

If my data recording was accurate and my arithmetic is correct, here are the results. There are 1825 people who are cited at least once in the *Handbook of Disability Studies*. Of this total, 1329 were cited only once, 149 were cited twice, 148 were cited three times, 86 were cited four times, 22 were cited five times, and 91 were cited six or more times. These 91 authors are to viewed as the elite in the field of disability studies.

Excluded from these results are 188 citations of institutional authors. These institutional authors ranged from the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Disabled People's International, the National Council on Disability, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the World Health Organization. Most of these institutional authors received only one citation and four at the most. Several of them, however, were cited many times. The champion institutional author, in terms of citations, was the World Health Organization with 36 cites. However, it would be unfair to compare institutional authors and human authors in this study so they were excluded.

People who consult the author index and find themselves cited only once should not despair. The following persons were among the ones cited only once: James S. Coleman, Anne Finger, Lex Frieden, John Kenneth Galbraith, John Hockenberry, Harriett McBryde Johnson, and Michael Polanyi. This is quite a distinguished group of authors.

People who find that they were only cited twice should also not despair. Among those cited only twice were Doug Baynton, Douglas Biklen, Gunnar Dybwad, Beth Haller, Paul Higgins, Corinne Kirchner, Mitch LaPlante, William Roth, and

Sean Sweeney. It is another distinguished group.

Those persons who were cited only three times should also not despair. They are in the company of Elizabeth Badley, Burton Blatt, W.E.B. Debs, Don Lollar, and Ed Roberts - all distinguished writers.

Those persons cited only four times also have no cause for despair. The four citation group includes Andrew Batavia, Robert Bogdan, Frank Bowe, Leonard Kriegel, and Gale Whiteneck all of whom are outstanding authors.

And those persons cited only five times were in the company of such distinguished persons as Ron Amundson, Ed Berkowitz, Bob Metts, Marcia Rioux, Kay Schriner, and David Wasserman.

Finally, the elite includes the following grouped by the number of citations from least to most. Some of these cited authors may not consider their field to be disability studies and may not even want to be considered as the elite of the field. Also, many persons in the field may not consider some of these already mentioned and those listed below to be in the field. This unfortunate result is due to data limitations and the measurement tool available.

Those authors cited six times are: E. Cambois, A.L. Caplan, L. Crow, F. Davis, R.F. Drake, S.D. Edwards, P. Ferguson, C. Gooding, J. Harris, D. Hevey, M.P. Kelly, S. Linton, H. Meekosha, D.M. Mertens, C.E. Oberman, T.R. Parmenter, T. Parsons, D. Pfeiffer, J-M. Robine, and R. Scott. Again, a question can be raised. Would the late Talcot Parsons really want to be listed as an eminent scholar in the field of disability studies?

Seven times cited authors are: B.M. Altman, D. Driedger, S. Litvak, J-F. Ravaud, J. Shapiro, A. Silvers, S. Snyder, C. Thomas, A.P. Turnbull, S. Wendell, W. Wolfensberger, and B.A. Wright. This list is notable for being 75% women. Whatever metaphysical implications this fact may have must be the subject for later research.

Authors cited eight times are: P. Abberley, M. Chamie, M. Corker, M. Fine, C. Gill, G.N. Grob, A. Sen, A.R. Tarlov, R.G. Thomson, and J.W. Trent. This list is 60% women. Perhaps quality is beginning to appear.

Nine times cited authors are: D. Braddock, P. Coleridge, M. Foucault, A. Gartner, H. Lane, M. Priestley, P. Singer, S.R. Whyte, and G.H. Williams. Should Foucault and Singer even be included in such a study as this one?

With the list of ten times cited authors we approach the cream of the crop: E.N. Brandt, M. Miles, R. Murphy, D.J. Rothman, D. Stone, and B.S. Turner. Add to these authors the ones cited eleven times: L. Barton, J. Campbell, P.J. Devlieger, A. Giddens, N. Groce, D. Mitchell, and H.J. Stiker. The twelve times cited authors are: M. Bury, J.I. Charlton, V. Finkelstein, P. Fougeyrollas, and B.A. Pescosolido. This list of those cited eleven times is interesting because it is 80% men.

The thirteen times cited authors are: S.N. Barnartt, L.J. Davis, P. Longmore, J. Morris, A.M. Pope. The fourteen times

cited authors are only two in number: B. Ingstad and G. Mercer. The fifteen times cited authors are also two in number: G. DeJong and S.Z. Nagi. There are no authors cited sixteen times. There are also only two seventeen times cited authors: S. French and A.M. Jette. There are no eighteen times cited authors, but two were cited nineteen times, A. Asch and J. Bickenbach and two were cited twenty times, H. Hahn and R. Scotch. One each was cited twentyone, twentytwo, and twentythree times, T. Shakespeare, E. Goffman, and L. Verbrugge.

The top cream consists of G. Albrecht (25 cites), C. Barnes (32 cites), I.K. Zola (33 cites), and the champion M. Oliver (60 cites). It is an interesting group with two Yanks (Albrecht and Zola) and two Brits (Barnes and Oliver).

There is much future research to be done. Departments, institutes, and centers should be pulled from the data and compared. The number of citations from the journals in the field should be compared along with the number of citations of books and from journals outside of the field. The number of times that Yanks cited Brits and Brits cited Yanks should also be compared. The number of times Yanks and Brits cited others and the number of times the others cited Yanks and Brits would be interesting. The possibilities are endless. Since the circus is a place for performers to portray their accomplishments it is apt that citations be used to grade the reputations of academic and other players. Still, more refinement is in order.

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