



The Societal Impact of History Books: Citations, Reader Ratings, and the 'Altmetric' Value of Goodreads

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Project Background



Elsevier:
Elsevier
Bibliometrics
Program
(EBRP)
Scopus History
Journal
Citations



Centre for
Digital
Humanities:
Amsterdam
Digital
Humanities
Grant



Spinque:
Relational
database design
(Roberto
Cornacchia)



WorldCat:
Publisher
data
(API)



Goodreads
Reader
reviews and
ratings
(API)



ILLC-UvA:
Querying and
analysing the
data
(Alesia Zuccala;
Frederik
Verleyesen)

Objective

- We are interested in **what the altmetric can do for the scholarly book author who wants his or her work to be read and valued widely.**



Goodreads

- "The world's largest site for readers and book recommendations" (Goodreads, 2013).

The screenshot shows the Goodreads website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Goodreads logo, a search bar, and links for Home, My Books, Groups, Recommendations, and Explore. Below the navigation bar, there's a section titled "Alesia, here are some tips to use Goodreads:" with three tips: "Add friends to see their latest reads", "Rate books you've read to get recommendations", and "Find and add books to your shelves". To the right, there's a "Currently Reading" section featuring the book "Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Trans..." and a "Recommendations" section with a "1 of 20 books rated" progress bar. The main content area is titled "Recent Updates" and shows a post from Kathryn Walters reading "The Cuckoo's Calling (Cormoran Strike, #1) by Robert Galbraith". There's also a "2014 Reading Challenge" section with a "Start Challenge" button. The bottom right corner features the University of Copenhagen logo.

Goodreads | Recent Updates

Goodreads | Recent Updates

https://www.goodreads.com

Search the web

goodreads Title / Author / ISBN Home My Books Groups Recommendations Explore

Alesia, here are some tips to use Goodreads:

Add friends to see their latest reads
Reading is more fun when shared. Browse your friends' bookshelves and comment on recent reads.

Rate books you've read to get recommendations
Rate 20 books and Goodreads will learn your tastes.

Find and add books to your shelves
Search by title, author, isbn, or list.

Currently Reading

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Trans...
started on April 13, 2013
update status
add a new book add a general update

Recommendations

Meet your next favorite book. Rate 19 books to get personalized recommendations from Goodreads.

1 of 20 books rated
Continue [hide]

2014 Reading Challenge

2014 reading challenge
Challenge yourself this year!
I will read books in 2014.
Start Challenge

Recent Updates

updates discussions

September 14 showing: friends and people I'm following ▼

Kathryn Walters is currently reading
The Cuckoo's Calling (Cormoran Strike, #1)
by Robert Galbraith
Want to Read
Rate this book
★★★★★
Sep 14, 2014 10:13AM · like · comment

September 13

Mick added

Goodreads

- Most people associate Goodreads with fiction
- As an interactive platform it runs akin to ancient days when citizens attending the Athens theatre were encouraged to discuss and judge which author had produced the best drama (Habib, 2005).



Subject Area: History

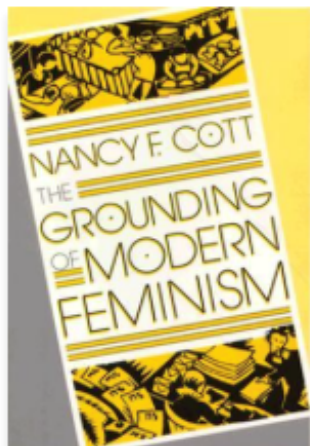


goodreads

Title / Author / ISBN



Home My Books Groups Recommendations Explore



The Grounding of Modern Feminism

by Nancy F. Cott

[Recommend it](#)★★★★☆ 3.49 · [rating details](#) · 53 ratings · 5 reviews

In this landmark addition to scholarship, Nancy F. Cott, author of the 'The Bonds of Womanhood,' offers a new interpretation of feminism in the United States during the early decades of this century--a period traditionally viewed as one in which women won the right to vote and then lost interest in feminist issues.

Paperback, 378 pages

Published September 10th 1989 by Yale University Press (first published 1987)

Want to Read



Rate this book



original title The Grounding of Modern Feminism
ISBN 0300042280 (ISBN13: 9780300042283)
edition language English
other editions (1)

[all editions](#) | [add a new edition](#) | [combine](#)[...less detail](#)[edit details](#)

Genres

[History](#)[Non Fiction](#)[Feminism](#)

General Research Questions

To what extent do scholarly monographs that have been well-cited in journal articles appeal to the lay public and achieve reader ratings on Goodreads?



General Research Questions

What are some additional underlying factors contributing to the appreciation (or critique) of scholarly books on Goodreads?

- *is the subject matter important or the publisher who produced the work?*
- *is the book present in many international libraries?*



General Research Questions

Why are some academics better than others at attracting recognition (i.e., by citation) from members of their own academic society as well as readers and reviewers from the wider public?



Why does History Matter?

- Explanations range from rationalistic or utilitarian to philosophical and psychological...
- History helps us to better shape our present...
- History can spark controversies about dealing with painful past episodes...



Why does History Matter?

- It can stimulate collective reflection and public debate
- Connect present to past; satisfying emotional, existential, and aesthetic needs



Publishing History

A 'public history' or history that matters requires **cooperation between academics and publishers**, but there has been some *tension* in this regard.

The inherent tension is **rooted in the economic logic of publishing** and the expectations that university faculties place on scholars.



Research Framework: Donovans (2008) three-phased approach

1. Technometric phase (*Academetric*)
– root term 'academy'; hence academy standards for historical analysis
2. Sociometric phase (Altmetrics)
3. Case study



Identify Resources

A Journal Citation Index
(i.e., **Elsevier Scopus**)

Bibliographic catalog of
publisher records (i.e.,
WorldCat®)

Social System of Reviews
& Reader Ratings
(**Goodreads**)



Objects-to-Data



PT J
 AU Brewer, DA
 AF Brewer, David A.
 TI Counting, Resonance, and Form, A Speculative Manifesto (with Notes)
 SO EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FICTION
 LA English
 DT Article

J: Journal Article published in
Eighteenth-Century Fiction

CR: Cited
 References

CR
 DICKIE S, 2011, CRUELTY LAUGHTER FOR
 FERGUS J, 2006, PROVINCIAL READERS 1, P85
 RUNGE L, 2005, COMPANION 18 CENTURY, P292
 MORETTI, 2005, GRAPHS MAPS TREES AB, P12
 RIZZO B, 2003, EARLY JOURNALS LETT, V4
 RAVEN J, 2003, FACES ANONYMITY ANON, P141
 MORETTI, 2000, MODERN LANGUAGE Q, V61
 MORETTI F, 2000, NEW LEFT REV, V1, P56
 COHEN M, 1999, SENTIMENTAL ED NOVEL, P23
 PEARSON J, 1999, WOMENS READING BRITA, P128
 AUSTEN J, 1995, J AUSTENS LETT, P43
 QUINE WV, 1957, P ADDRESSES AM PHILO, V31, P20
 TOMPKINS JMS, 1932, POPULAR NOVEL ENGLAN, pR8
 STUART L, 1930, PRIVATE LETT BOOKS W, P273
 RUNGE L, 1788, CRIT REV, V65, P486
 1778, EXAMPLE HIST L CLEVE, pR5
 LOWNDES T, 1778, LONDON CHRONICL 1126
 MACKENZIE H, 1771, MAN FEELING, pR8

Reference String for:
 Dickie, S. (2011). *Cruelty
 and Laughter: Forgotten
 Comic Literature and the
 Unsentimental Eighteenth
 Century*. Chicago: University
 of Chicago Press.

Bibliographic data matching



Cited books
recorded in Scopus
journals

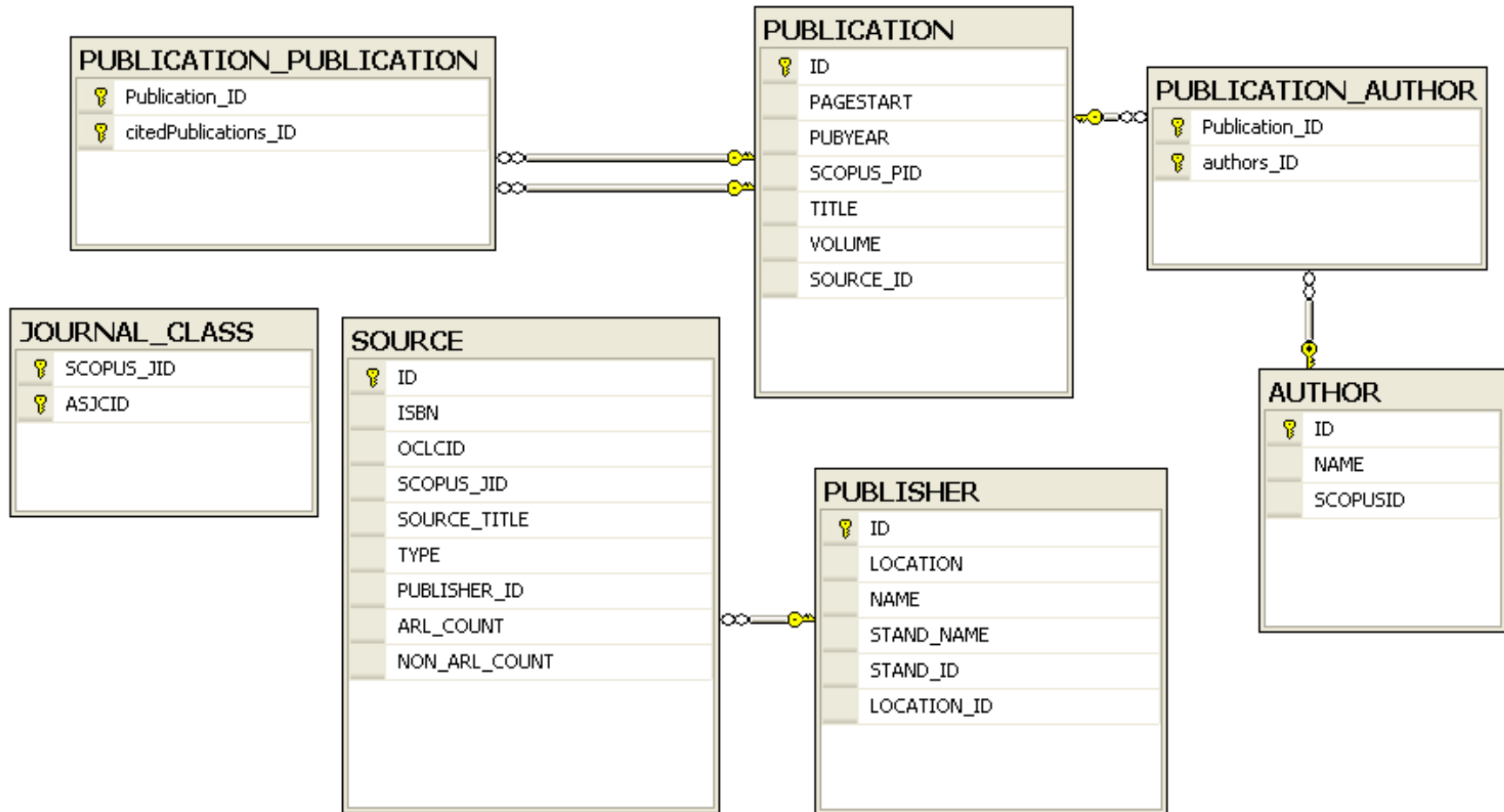
- Title
- Date of publication
- Author



API developer key
matches cited title
to catalog title

- Book Title
- OCLC ID#
- ISBN#
- Publisher name
- Publisher location

Parsing the Data: Database development



Standardizing the Data

DATABASE_ID	ISBN	TITLE (cited variations)	CITECOUNT
1631477	0804734194	European Feminisms	4
1631472	0804734194	European Feminisms 1700-1950	1
2136038	0804734194	European Feminisms 1700-1950. A Political History	2
5318151	0804734194	European Feminisms 1700-1950: A Political History	3
5177203	0804734194	European Feminisms, 1700-1950. A Political History	1
2150431	0804734194	European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History	8
8340201	0804734194	European Feminisms, 1700-1950; A Political History	1
5519599	0804734194	European Feminisms,1700-1950: A Political History	1
MERGED_ID	ISBN	TITLE (merged variations)	CITECOUNT
8340201	0804734194	European Feminisms, 1700-1950; A Political History	21



Data Collection

Book Titles Cited in Scopus <i>History journals (2007-2011)</i>	Rated by Readers on Goodreads (2006-2013)	
	Lower reader ratings (<10)	Higher reader ratings (>9)
Lower citations (< 5)	25,975 *	2,210
Higher citations (>4)	3,053	1,752
	* Removed completely from the original dataset. The basic assumption here is that either the book was too new to accumulate citations and reader ratings within the given time periods or it was not of great scholarly and general readership interest.	Total=7,015
<p>SOURCE_ID: 618933 ISBN: 292775962 SOURCE_TITLE: Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986 CITE_COUNT: 20 RATINGS_COUNT: 32 AVGSTAR_RATING: 3.70 REVIEWS_COUNT: 2 PUBLISHER_NAME: University of Texas Press ARL_COUNT: 105 NON_ARL COUNT: 698 DDC: 976.4 MAIN CLASS: History and geography</p>		



Group A

Higher Scopus citations (>4) with **lower** Goodreads reader ratings (<10)

Correlations

			Citations count	Ratings count
Spearman's rho	Citations count	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.128**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
		N	3053	3053
	Ratings count	Correlation Coefficient	.128**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
		N	3053	3053

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).



Data Collection

Book Titles Cited in Scopus <i>History journals (2007-2011)</i>	Rated by Readers on Goodreads (2006-2013)	
	Lower reader ratings (<10)	Higher reader ratings (>9)
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Group B

Higher Scopus citations (>4) with **higher** Goodreads reader ratings (>9)

Correlations

			Citations count	Ratings count
Spearman's rho	Citations count	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.235**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
		N	1752	1752
	Ratings count	Correlation Coefficient	.235**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
		N	1752	1752

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Data Collection

Book Titles Cited in Scopus <i>History journals (2007-2011)</i>	Rated by Readers on Goodreads (2006-2013)	
	Lower reader ratings (<10)	Higher reader ratings (>9)
Lower citations (< 5)	25,975 *	2,210
Higher citations (>4)	3,053	1,752
	* Removed completely from the original dataset. The basic assumption here is that either the book was too new to accumulate citations and reader ratings within the given time periods or it was not of great scholarly and general readership interest.	Total=7,015
<p>SOURCE_ID: 618933 ISBN: 292775962 SOURCE_TITLE: Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986 CITE_COUNT: 20 RATINGS_COUNT: 32 AVGSTAR_RATING: 3.70 REVIEWS_COUNT: 2 PUBLISHER_NAME: University of Texas Press ARL_COUNT: 105 NON_ARL COUNT: 698 DDC: 976.4 MAIN CLASS: History and geography</p>		



Group C

Lower Scopus citations (<5) with **higher** Goodreads reader ratings (>9)

Correlations

			Citations count	Ratings count
Spearman's rho	Citations count	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.045*
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.017
		N	2210	2210
	Ratings count	Correlation Coefficient	-.045*	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.017	.
		N	2210	2210

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).



Table 3: Correlation measures for Group B, based on reader rating counts, written reviews and library holding counts in libraries not affiliated with the Association for Research Libraries (non-ARL).

Correlations

			Citations count	Ratings count	Non-ARL count	Reviews count
Spearman's rho	Citations count	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.235**	.081**	.184**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	1752	1752	1752	1752	
	Ratings count	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	.430**	.859**
Sig. (1-tailed)			.	.000	.000	
N			1752	1752	1752	
Non-ARL count	Correlation Coefficient			1.000	.405**	
	Sig. (1-tailed)			.	.000	
	N			1752	1752	
Reviews count	Correlation Coefficient				1.000	
	Sig. (1-tailed)				.	
	N				1752	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).



Three Groups...

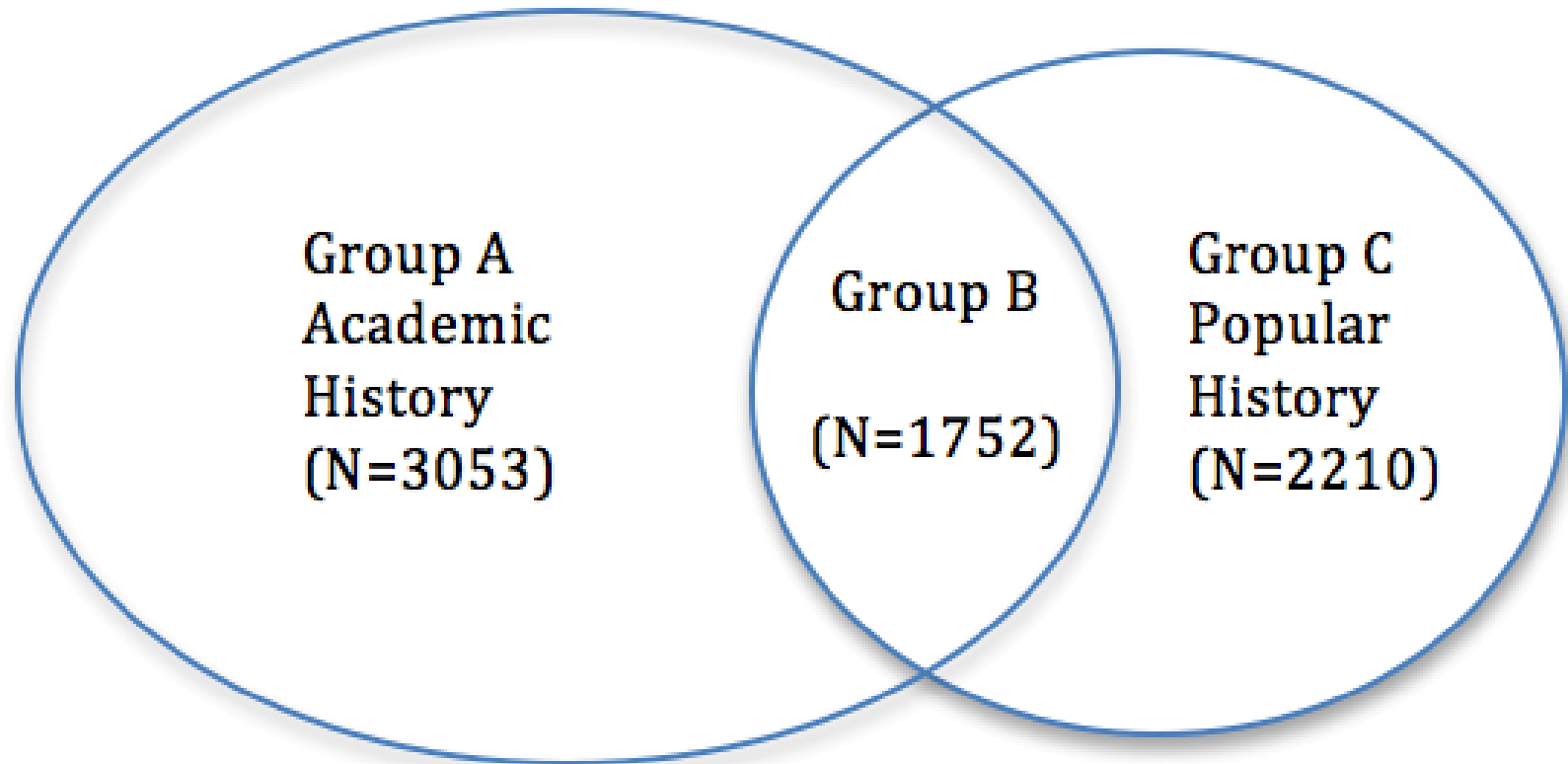


Figure 1: Overlapping academic and social communication systems

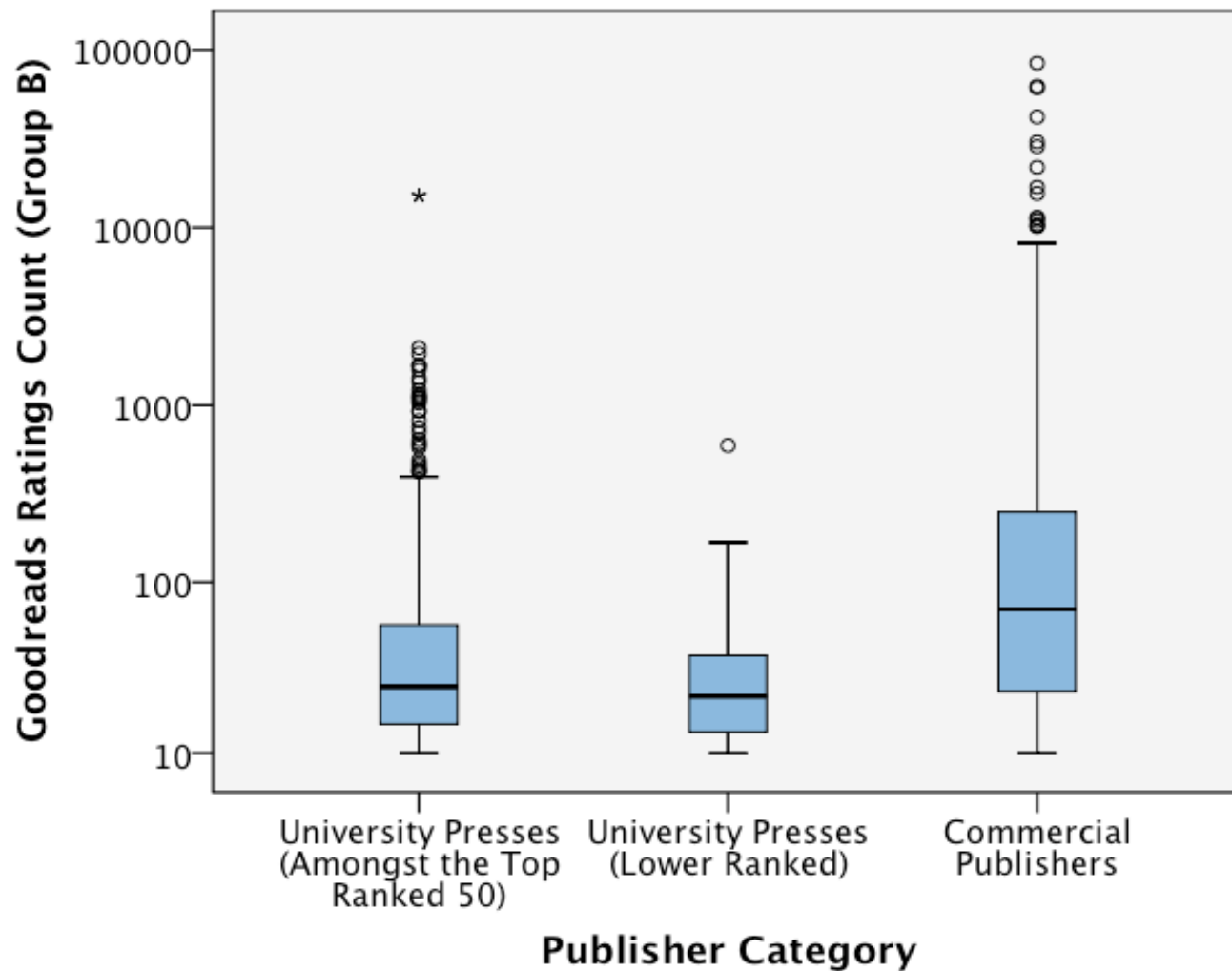


Figure 2. Goodreads review rating counts for cited book titles based on publisher type

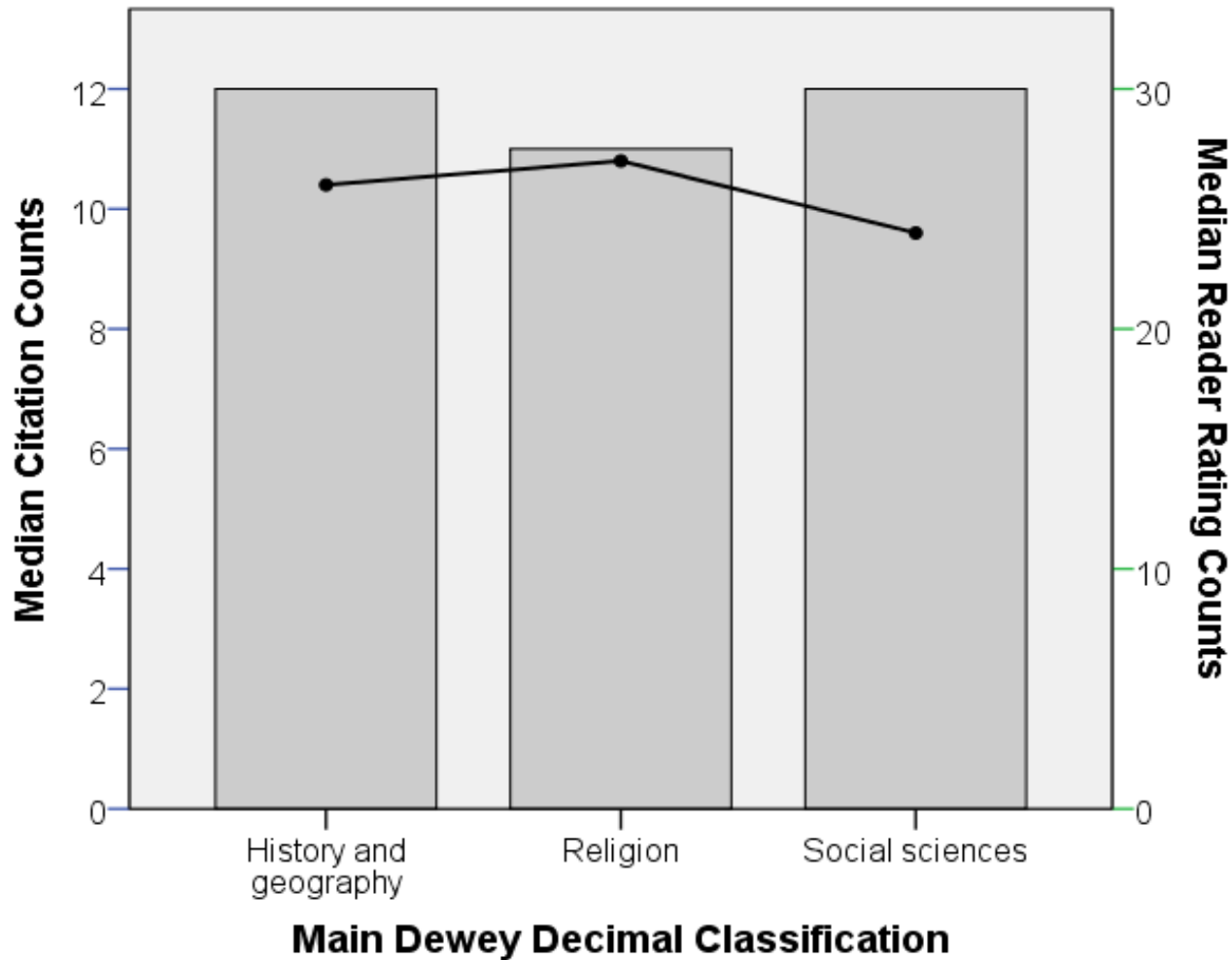


Figure 3. Median citation counts compared to reader rating counts for three main Dewey Decimal Classification Areas (University Presses; N= 1035)

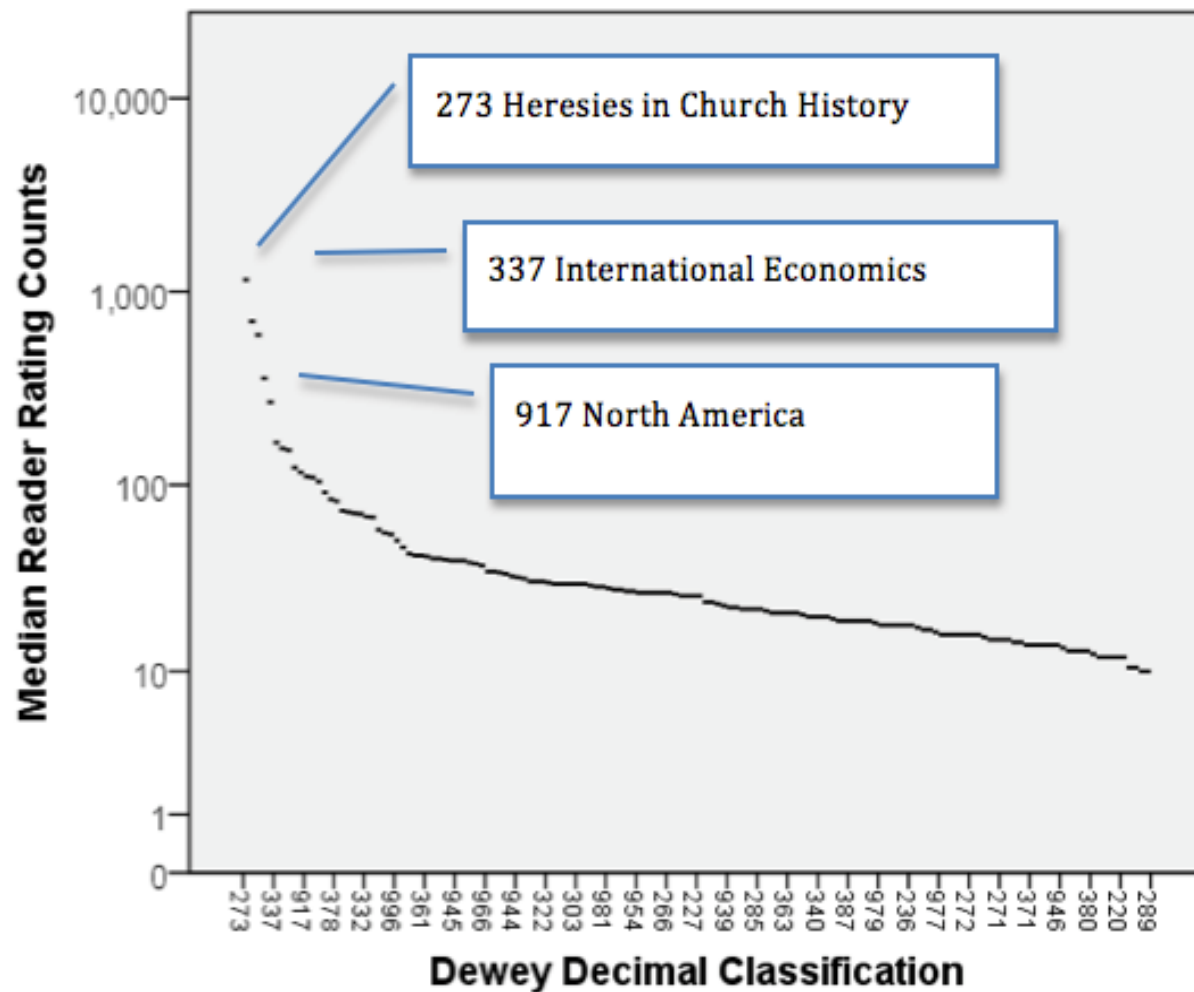


Figure 4. Median reader rating counts associated with specific DDC areas (University Presses; N= 1035)

1,549
Ratings

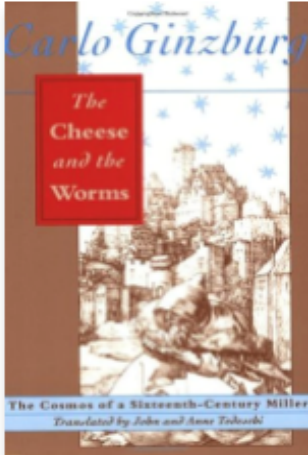
Goodreads | The Cheese and the Worms: T... — Reviews, Discussion, Bookclubs, Lists

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/71148.The_Cheese_and_the_Worms

Humanities | Wikipedia | UPresses | JobSearch | Nederlands | Dropbox | Geni

Goodreads | The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller by Carlo Ginzburg

goodreads Title / Author / ISBN Home My Books Groups Recommendations




The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller

by Carlo Ginzburg, John Tedeschi (Translator), Anne Tedeschi (Translator)

★★★★☆ 3.93 · rating details · 1,549 ratings · 99 reviews


The Cheese and the Worms is a study of the popular culture in the sixteenth century as seen through the eyes of one man, a miller brought to trial during the Inquisition. Carlo Ginzburg uses the trial records of Domenico Scandella, a miller also known as Menocchio, to show how one person responded to the confusing political and religious conditions of his time.

For a common...more

Want to Read 

Rate this book
★★★★☆

Paperback, 208 pages
Published March 1st 1992 by Johns Hopkins University Press (first published 1976)

original title	Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500
ISBN	0801843871 (ISBN13: 9780801843877)
edition language	English
url	http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/history/ginzburg/
characters	Domenico Scandella
other editions (21)	

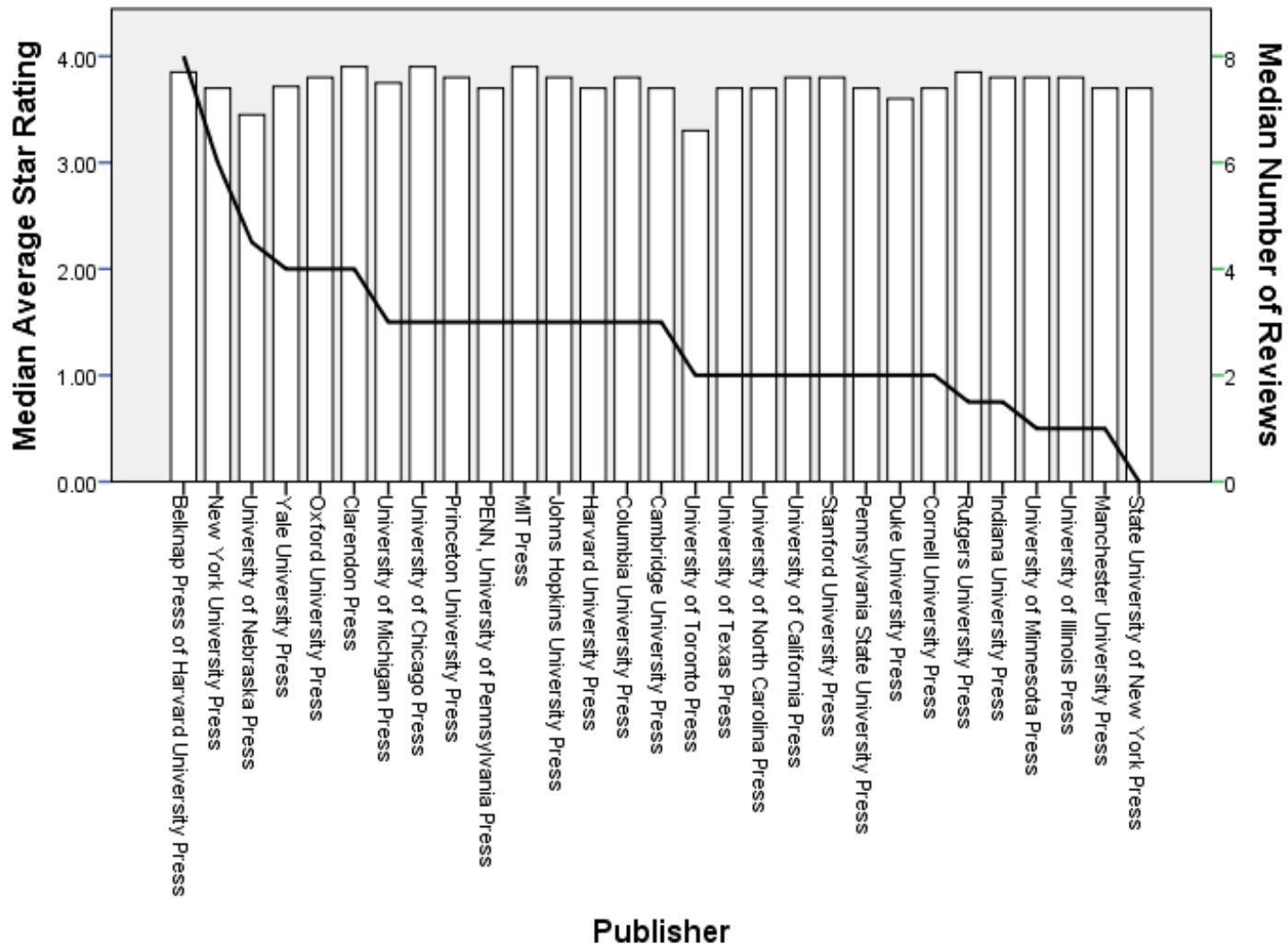



Figure 5. Median average star ratings and median number of reviews written for books published by top ranking university presses in history (N= 1035)


Goodreads | The Cheese and the Worms: T... Reviews, Discussion, Bookclubs, Lists
 https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/71148.The_Chee Reader
 Humanities Wikipedia UPresses JobSearch Nederlands Dropbox Geni
 Goodreads | The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller by Carlo Gi...

 **Jan-Maat** added it · review of another edition Jun 13, 2011
 Shelves: early-modern-history, italy, 20th-century, religion

Fantastic study based on trial records of a sixteenth century Italian miller charged with heresy. The book offers a glimpse into an alternative (and generally unheard from) worldview that is full of so much imagination on the part of the miller that it should put many a fiction writer to shame.


That really is its strength and virtue, to be a reminder that the masses of people that now we label as Lutheran, Catholic or Anabaptist were a mess of individuals. While the beliefs of the hierarchies can...more

6 likes · like · comment · see review

 **Karen** rated it ★★★★★ Jul 25, 2011

The Cheese and the Worms is a ground breaking exposé into the field of microhistory and remains a foundational work for historians today. Ginzberg used the story of Menocchio, a sixteenth century miller who was twice prosecuted and ultimately condemned by the inquisition for holding and preaching egregiously heretical beliefs. As a miller and a literate man, Menocchio had a greater exposure to people and ideas than the average peasant-farmer, and apparently also a keen intellect which he used to...more

3 likes · like · comment · see review

 **Jen** rated it ★★★★★ Jan 12, 2013

As a medievalist, I run across this book all the time, which is funny considering it's not really a medieval book (it's more Renaissance/early modern). It's made a huge splash in The Study of Old Things, though, so I'm not surprised it finally showed up in a class of mine on the reading list.

So, the gist of the story (and it really does read like a story, which is kind of neat) is Ginzburg following the trials by the inquisition (no, not the one you didn't expect,

Fantastic study based on trial records of a sixteenth century Italian miller charged with heresy

The Cheese and the Worms is a ground breaking expose into the field of microhistory and remains a foundational work for historians today

Research in Progress....

Thank you kindly for your
attention!

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