The citation impact of German sociology journals and the validity of scientometric evaluations

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Published in:
4S 2015, Denver : Denver, Colorado, 11-14 November. Program with Abstracts

Citation for published version (APA):

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Download date: 07 Apr 2020
circulation can be impeded due to a language barrier. Thirdly, citation distributions are heavily skewed because of the positive loops (preferential attachment). Given this skewness one should not use quasi-averages (such as the IF). Using non-parametric statistics (e.g., percentiles), however, requires delineation of field-specific reference sets. What would be a relevant reference set in the case we examine: other sociological journals or other social-science journals in German? The German sociology journals are cited by the latter, but are citing the former as the knowledge bases. Fourth, the attribution of journal measures to individual paper implies an ecological fallacy: inferences about the nature of single records (here: papers) are deduced from inferences for the groups to which these records belong (here: the journal where the papers were published). Finally, algorithmic constructs (e.g., the various rankings) cannot be used for policy or management purposes without validation or specification of statistical error.