



How Junk Citations Have Discredited the Academy: Part 1

[**BRUCE GILLEY**](#)

March 9, 2023

Editor's Note: This piece is part of an ongoing series of articles by Professor Bruce Gilley. To read the other articles in the series, [click here](#).

In a grant request I was recently asked to review, the applicant cited a 2022 academic [article](#) by the grandly titled Boeing Distinguished Assistant Professor in Environmental Sociology at Washington State University, Dylan Bugden, titled “Environmental Inequality in the American Mind: The Problem of Color-Blind Environmental Racism.” Bugden’s article, the applicant asserted, “revealed that the dominant explanatory factor” for citizens’ diverse views about the distribution of environmental harms in the United States “is racial bias.” Moreover, the applicant wrote, the article proved that

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opposition to “policies to address environmental inequality is strongly associated with racist attitudes.”

If you have been in the academy long enough, you know that such a “Just trust me, this is what it says” citation style is now rampant in academic writing. Graduate students unfortunate enough to have me as their advisor know that they will get an earful if they cite a work in this knee-jerk, “reflexive” manner without telling me anything about its methods and conclusions, especially if they distort or decontextualize those conclusions. In a [study](#) of 248 citations for claims in articles published in 2017 in five top scientific journals, Smith and Cumberledge found that 25% of the claims were either partly (4%) or wholly (8%) unsubstantiated by the citations—or, worse, that they had *no logical connection* to the citation (13%).

Last year, I gave a talk on “Ending the Cancer of Reflexive Citations in Research” that was live-streamed and that can be [viewed](#) online. I covered multiple dimensions of the rot of junk citations that are today at the heart of academic research, a topic that I will return to in subsequent installments. The main point is that a key reason for the well-earned loss of respect and legitimacy of scholars, in addition to the better-known left-wing political and ideological biases driving their research, is the problem of bad citation practices that have created whole research paradigms built upon junk citations.

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The two are related because, as I will argue in this series, the reason that bad citation practices have become so endemic in academic research is because of the lack of intellectual diversity in the academy. Since groupthink is so pervasive, any citations that confirm academics' left-wing biases are rarely double-checked. And so junk piles upon junk.

Let's return to my grant applicant, who, unfortunately, will be smarting like my graduate students after reading my response to this citation of Professor Bugden's work.

Bugden's article is based on a survey of 1,000 Americans in 2020. He seeks to explain their views on so-called "environmental inequality," or the distribution of environmental harms across individuals. The outcome variable (Y) is not the variety of views held by Americans on this issue, but rather the extent to which they accept as gospel "the scientific fact and moral problem of environmental racism." In other words, "accurate beliefs" are defined as those that see environmental harms as racially patterned (versus, say, socio-economically or regionally patterned, or not patterned at all in any robust fashion).

For an explanatory variable (X), he turns to the silly but widely used "racial resentment" scale of the American National Election Studies (ANES). This scale describes people as racist if they agree with the claims that blacks should work their way up in American society like everyone else without special favors; that blacks have an equal opportunity in the U.S.; that blacks' socio-economic status reflects their productivity; and that overcoming anti-bourgeois attitudes is key to uplifting black

communities. I, for one, happen to agree with all of those statements, as do many blacks, so I suppose we would all be labelled inveterate racists by the ANES.

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Bugden calls this X variable in his model “colorblind racial ideology.” His article does not explain its construction, substituting instead a series of citations to others on the ANES love-train that we are supposed to take on faith.

A high school student should see the flaw immediately: his model claims to show that one woke definition of racism (X) explains another woke definition of racism (Y). I say “claims” because even with an essentially tautological set-up intended to display the severed heads of the deplorables on pikes, the model coughs up less than a third of the variations in the outcome. The Boeing Corporation is clearly not getting its money’s worth in terms of progressive, anti-racist research from their man in Pullman.

So why did the applicant, whose grant I read, so breathlessly cite this article in a way that told us nothing about its methods, much less its fatal weaknesses? Because the applicant was seeking monies to explain the ways that conservatives and Republicans have held up the “equity and justice” of the Green New Deal with their unapologetic racism.

It takes a freak in contemporary academia to ask the question: what is this citation and what does it do? I guess that’s me. In future installments, I will show the many other ways

that junk citations are the bedrock of what passes for research today.

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Discussion

DR. ED March 12, 2023

“The Boeing Corporation is clearly not getting its money’s worth in terms of progressive, anti-racist research from their man in Pullman.”

Sadly, they actually are – this essentially is the modern equivalent of having paid off the cops.

”the applicant was seeking monies to explain the ways that conservatives and Republicans have held up the “equity and justice” of the Green New Deal with their unapologetic racism.”

There is *so* much of this in my field (education) and when I want to address issues of educating boys in general (and the NAEP “boy gap” in language skills is greater than the STEM “girl gap”) but it can *only* be addressed in the context of either “schools shortchange girls” or “schools shortchange minorities.”

Both may be true – actually *are* true in some cases – but I want to deal with something that I actually know something about – issues involving the education of boys in the mostly-White school districts of *rural* New England. And that’s racist...

(And I mean *really* rural, schools that have a graduating class of 30-40 kids even though they are the *consolidated* schools of a dozen towns. One room schoolhouses, which still exist. Etc...)

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How Junk Citations Have Discredited the Academy: Part 2

[BRUCE GILLEY](#)

March 16, 2023

Editor's Note: This piece is part of an ongoing series of articles by Professor Bruce Gilley. To read the other articles in the series, [click here](#).

In 1980, two doctors from the Boston University Medical Center published a five-sentence [letter](#) in the *New England Journal of Medicine* noting that only four of their 11,882 patients prescribed opioids developed an addiction. They concluded that “the development of addiction is rare” when opioids are prescribed. They provided no evidence and did not caution that their letter referred only to in-hospital applications rather than personal prescriptions.

From then until 2017, the letter was cited 439 times in scientific literature to support the

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claim that addiction was rare in patients given opioids, according to a 2017 analysis by University of Toronto scholar Pamela Leung and colleagues. This one junk citation, they believe, was a contributing factor to the opioid epidemic in the United States. “The crisis arose in part because physicians were told that the risk of addiction was low when opioids were prescribed for chronic pain,” they wrote. The letter “was widely invoked in support of this claim.”

While not usually so deadly, junk citations are widespread in academic research. The term refers to a citation that is wrong, irrelevant, misleading, corrupt, uninformative, useless, or purely rhetorical. At root, junk citations have become a way to signal the scientific basis of a claim without actually explaining what that basis is, a lazy shortcut that has turned millions of academic minds to mush. In the words of Ole Bjørn Rekdal, a Norwegian anthropologist who has written extensively on junk citations, “At times, I get the feeling that references have been placed in quantities and with a degree of precision reminiscent of last minute oregano flakes being sprinkled over a pizza on the way to the oven.”

Such straightforward citational errors are the core of the problem, which I discussed last year in a talk that can be viewed online. The problem existed long before the Internet and citation software, but these tools made it exponentially worse. Today, much credentialled research is built upon a cannonade of junk citations, which forces the reader to submit in the face of an overwhelming bombardment. As the scientific foundations of published research have been weakened by junk citations,

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the undisciplined ideologies and agendas of researchers have been given freer rein.

In the first part of this series, I discussed a citation in a grant application that the applicant had not read, had not understood, or had wanted to pass off as scientific despite its obvious flaws. Such a failure to tell the reader anything about a cited work is the cardinal sin on which many junk citations rely. It violates the fundamental rule, laid down by Wayne Booth and colleagues in their widely-used *The Craft of Research*, that anytime we cite the work of others, we must tell the reader what research they did, what their findings were, and what, if anything, limits these findings' relevance to the current argument. “Don’t accept a claim just because an authority asserts it,” they warned (on page 87 of the third edition published in 2008).

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There is nothing wrong with providing the reader with a set of “further readings” or “related research.” But if citations are deployed as *part of an argument*, including an argument about what other research has been done on a topic, then they cannot be on a “Just trust me” basis. Reader beware.

Dozens of studies have shown that many citations contained in academic research are, to varying degrees, flawed. This could be as simple as getting the page number wrong. But more often, it involves misrepresenting or misunderstanding the source’s claims. In a 2017 exposé of bad citations in 472 articles in three peer-reviewed library science journals,

Wilfrid Laurier University librarians Peter Genzinger and Deborah Wills found that 30% of the citations misrepresented the cited work, either wholly or in part.

Junk citations weaken not only evidence but also objectivity. They provide a bully pulpit from which scholars can assert that their claims are “well-documented” or “the overwhelming consensus” of the field. Critics of my 2017 article “The Case for Colonialism,” such as Ohio University’s Brandon Kendhammer, used fusillades of junk citations that, I showed elsewhere, were almost all incorrect. Kendhammer’s junk citation-based article is now cited by other ideologues. In their 2022 article demanding reparations from the West, Elise Klein and Elizaveta Fouksman cite it as “a good overview” of the “extensive” evidence of “the brutal legacy of colonialism.” Junk food leads to obesity, and junk citations lead to academic propaganda.

The truth is, we are all junkies. But there is hope. I recently published my first academic article that does not contain a single junk citation. The experience was liberating. I did not feel the need to take a shower afterward because my co-author and I knew that we had read and explained every source we cited and had used them in a way consistent with the findings and duly respectful of the authors. Rather than treating the work of others as doormats that we trampled upon while rushing to assert our own “contribution,” we carefully read and described it, putting our own contribution in a more modest light.

In future installments, I will show how junk citations have taken on darker purposes.



How Junk Citations Have Discredited the Academy: Part 3

[BRUCE GILLEY](#)

March 23, 2023

Editor's Note: This piece is part of an ongoing series of articles by Professor Bruce Gilley. To read the other articles in the series, [click here](#).

If you plan to present a paper at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Spokane next year, please be advised: your submission needs to be chock full of citations to the work of blacks. That's just a starter. In addition, there should be lots of citations to other non-white and non-male scholars. Each proposal will be screened to ensure that it "uplifts and amplifies Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, and other multiply marginalized perspectives."

We're still not done. Since the conference is about how all college writing should assail

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“capitalist rhetorics [sic.] of scarcity” and “the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy,” aspiring presenters would do well to include citations from indigenous spiritualists as well. Doing so, promises conference chair Jennifer Sano-Franchini of West Virginia University in her mercilessly cringeworthy call for papers, will be like “the Indigenous practice of *potlatch*, the ceremonial sharing of gifts and property.”

On that note, don’t even think of citing research from the last people who actually observed the *potlatch* and described it as a way to formalize social hierarchies, resolve bloody wars, or sacralize vast inequalities of wealth. No citations to such works are welcome in Spokane. The whole point of this “citation justice,” promises Sano-Franchini, is to “disrupt white settler logic” and “trouble [sic.] narrow conceptions of expertise.”

A loony-bin academic conference in a remote galaxy? Think again! The so-called “citation justice” movement is on the warpath. Academic conferences, journals, publishers, and grant agencies are demanding that scholars figure out the race, gender, and sexual preferences of those they cite before deciding whether they are cite-worthy. This has taken the existing problem of junk citations driven by laziness and added a new dimension to it: patronizing and degrading motives.

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In February, the all-female editorial team of the *American Political Science Review* (APSR) delivered themselves of the view that

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“epistemic injustice” plagues academia. Henceforth all submissions to their journal will be screened for “citations to work by underrepresented scholars.” The aim is purely scientific of course, since this is supposed to be political *science*. The citation police would “benefit knowledge production,” even though we might ask whether a certain Professor of Potlatch might deem this evidence of “white settler logic.”

Here’s the funny thing: in addition to being ludicrous from a scientific perspective, the citation *diktat* by the ladies of the APSR is full of lazy junk citations, which I discussed in the last installment of this series. Indeed, they do not seem aware of the problem. “[W]hile including citations to work by underrepresented scholars can go some distance” to remedy all that injustice, they write of their new fiat, authors who really want to make a splash might consider reading the cited works! If authors “take the time and make the effort to carefully engage with this scholarship,” it will be duly noted as evidence of 110% commitment during the rigorous peer-review process.

Not to be left out of the scramble for diversity citations, the APSR ladies helpfully direct prospective authors to the University of Wisconsin’s Gender Balance Citation Tool, which issues red alerts if too few women are cited. Nothing untoward here, insist Sharon, Michelle, Clarissa, Kelly, Celeste, Julie, Valeria, Dara, Aili Mari, Denise, Laurel, and Elisabeth. It’s all about following the science!

The citation justice movement is the logical consequence of junk citations. Once citations

became lazy shortcuts or simple padding for rhetorical or decorative purposes, the game was afoot. There was a money tree to be shaken. Predictably, scholars with ideological agendas or those who believed their excellent work was not being cited because they were not white males rushed to the barricades. As those scholars have marched through the institutions and seized power, junk citations have become both corrupt and lazy. Two black academics who set up a “collective” (or *potlatch*), called Cite Black Women explain that citations have nothing to do with science but with power. “The most cited authors are deemed thought leaders, and their works are regarded as scientific knowledge,” they write. If it’s all just social signaling, why not get in on the game?

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Indeed, one might argue that the citation justice movement is less junky than the random nature of normal junk citations—at least the works are being cited *for a reason*. If there are spoils to be had, why not dole them out on the basis of genitalia, skin pigmentation, and sexual stimulation preferences? Some reason seems better than no reason at all.

When I first pointed out the growing plague of citation justice in a talk to colleagues in Thailand, the problem had not yet spread beyond the West. But Asian scholars are nothing if not diligent and attuned to norm shifts driving the academic journals in which they need to publish. As a result, I now get emails from totally sincere colleagues in the region asking if I could recommend, for instance, “a black scholar’s paper on integrated

policy tools in the design of wastewater facilities.”

Citation justice is only the most prominent example of corruption that has crept into the cracks created by junk citations. It is easy to make fun of because of its fevered ideological agenda. In the next installment, I will discuss forms of citation corruption that are no laughing matter.

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Discussion

CHARLES J February 26, 2024

When reviewing a manuscript submitted to a top medical journal last year, I observed that I was not familiar with any of the citations. Despite the “hot topic” nature of race and shootings treated at Level 1 trauma centers, all of the citations were in obscure journals. Doing some work, I found that most citations could be traced to authors at/from the four Historically Black Medical Schools. I tried to use AI to do the check, but it refused to parse names by race/ethnicity in citations, although it would provide lists of names by race/ethnicity alone.

Without highlighting the “race card” in play, I alerted the editor to failures in citation authority and the manuscript was returned for revisions. It was never resubmitted, but I’m sure I’ll see it published in another obscure journal, as Citation Justice was clearly more important to the authors than the research itself.



How Junk Citations Have Discredited the Academy: Part 4

[**BRUCE GILLEY**](#)

March 30, 2023

Editor's Note: This piece is part of an ongoing series of articles by Professor Bruce Gilley. To read the other articles in the series, [click here](#).

Just when serious scholars started to worry about the pandemic of junk citations, others were positively promoting them. The “citation justice” movement I discussed in [the last installment](#) is one example. Another, which I will discuss here, is less visible: “citation-doping,” which some scholars and academic journals use to boost their citation counts.

Not all citation-doping is seen by its practitioners as unethical. Often, it is unintentional; other times, it is thought to be fair play given the competition for citations. At my host university in Thailand, large [banners](#)

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are hoisted across campus every year to congratulate faculty and graduate students whose work was highly cited in the previous year. With so much at stake, it's little wonder that inordinate effort goes into boosting, or "doping," citation counts by means fair or foul.

Author-level doping begins with the simple act of citing one's own truly remarkable research with alarming frequency. This leads to some comical outcomes, such as the discovery that the hitherto unknown giant of computer science research, Sundarapandian Vaidyanathan of the privately run Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology in Chennai, India, was as highly cited in his field as Nobel laureates. A study of super self-citers found, on closer inspection, that 94% of Vaidyanathan's citations came from himself or his co-authors, compared to a median self-citation rate across all disciplines of about 13%. The study listed no fewer than 100,000 researchers like Vaidyanathan who had gained more than half of their citations from their biggest fan.

Many claim that men self-cite more than women. Thus, female academics raise their fists with the battle cry to "cite only women." This claim is untrue, though, according to a study of 1.6 million articles published between 2002 and 2005 in the field of biomedicine. The real reason for the disparity is that more productive scholars have more opportunities and greater visibility, both of which allow for relevant self-citations. Women tend to have shorter, more disrupted careers, which lessens both factors. Women otherwise self-cite just as often as men do.

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The more nefarious form of author-level doping involves “citation rings,” or “citation cartels.” Here, a group of scholars colludes to cite one another’s work. In 2014, the publisher Sage retracted 60 articles in the *Journal of Vibration and Control*, alleging that Peter Chen of National Pingtung University of Education in Taiwan had forged a network of fraudsters (including the Taiwanese Minister of Education, who resigned over the scandal) that was used to peer-review and then, later, cite the works of the cartel members.

More vigilant editors could catch this. So, a newer practice is to sneak in cartel citations in the production phase when the editors are asleep. In this paper from China, the authors added no fewer than 10 citations in a concluding sentence that was not in the pre-print edition. This, according to the gadfly site PubPeer, is known as a “citation delivery vehicle.”

Sometimes, the journal editors themselves are the dopers. So-called “coercive citations” are the academic equivalent of the casting couch, forcing prospective authors to cite the work of the journal editors in order to be considered for publication. Biophysicist Kuo-Chen Chou of Boston was barred from the editorial board of the *Journal of Theoretical Biology* in 2020 for his quite untheoretical habit of demanding that authors cite his papers (an astounding average of 31 for each aspiring author). Sometimes, he even forced them to add him as a co-author. Not surprisingly, academics now make a point of citing the editors of the journals they submit

to in advance. Nothing like a little flattery to grease the wheels of the scientific endeavor.

It's a small step from *author-level doping* to *journal-level doping*. Although journal impact factors are supposed to exclude citations to a journal from that journal itself, many editors still ask authors to lard some references to past articles. The index Journal Citation Reports suspended 329 journals for excessive self-citations between 2007 and 2017.

[Related: “How Junk Citations Have Discredited the Academy: Part 2”]

To skirt the self-citation exclusions, journals collude with sister publications to force authors to cite articles in each other's journal. Thomson Reuters suspended the journal *Applied Clinical Informatics* (ACI) for boosting the citation performance of sister journal *Methods of Information in Medicine* (MIM). An inquiry discovered that 39% of the 2015 citations to MIM came from ACI. Similarly, three Romanian physics journals doped each other's citation counts, according to a 2016 article by Petr Heneberg of Charles University in Prague.

Often the journal-level dope is injected during the key years when a journal's impact factor is being calculated, usually the most recent two to five years. As a result, articles older than this become essentially ignored, worsening the bias toward “the latest” thinking, which is already super-charged by the Internet and social media.

Of course, as with author-level doping, some journal-level doping is unintentional. U.S. law school students who edit law reviews, bless

their hearts, seem to think that all important research on American law is published in student-edited law reviews. They thus encourage authors to reference little else. It's endearing, but wrong, according to an analysis by four Israeli scholars.

Citation justice warriors point to such sociological causes as reasons why they need to form their own rival citation cartels for, say, blacks or homosexuals. Citation justice is, in this respect, simply a citation cartel in the open. Academic citations thus devolve into a sort of eighteenth-century naval battle in which various ships under different flags maneuver to gain the headwind while blasting off cannons of citations to scuttle yonder scoundrels.

In the concluding installment of this series, I will consider some solutions to the flotsam and jetsam of academic credibility caused by junk citations.

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Discussion

GEORGE H AVERY April 2, 2023

Some level of self-citation is essential if only to give the reader a background on the intellectual foundation of the work when it builds on prior work by the author. In this time when academia increasingly pushes researchers into ever granular specialization, one can often find researchers doing such siloed work that their own IS the only, or

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How Junk Citations Have Discredited the Academy: Part 5

BRUCE GILLEY

April 7, 2023

Editor's Note: This piece is part of an ongoing series of articles by Professor Bruce Gilley. To read the other articles in the series, [click here](#).

Let's start with the obvious. The plague of junk citations in modern academic research will not be curbed by digital or bureaucratic means. For every clever new software tool designed to detect anomalies—including self-citations, irrelevant citations, incorrect citations, sister-journal citations, or citations to scholars from politically correct groups—new digital workarounds will appear. The “citation delivery vehicle” mentioned in the [last installment](#) of this series is just one example.

Similarly, for every virtuous declaration of a passionate commitment to scientific integrity,

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journals will still rely on self-policing and editorial motivation. For example, the editors of *Proceedings of the Royal Society A (Mathematical, Physical, and Engineering Sciences)* promised in a 2020 [editorial](#) on citation malpractice to “revise advice to authors and to referees to remind them of the importance of adherence to high ethical standards.” But it is the absence of high ethical standards, or even a shared idea of what those entail, that got us into this mess. It is like reminding a serial killer of the importance of the sixth commandment.

To be sure, some simple rules can cut down on junk citations: each and every cited work needs to be discussed and explained if it is used as part of an argument; peer reviewers may not under any circumstances “suggest” additional citations; any self-citations must be absolutely essential; and a padding of citations to the work of scholars who are black or indigenous or women or who belong to the latest fad group is automatic grounds to dismiss the merits of a piece of research.

[Related: “How Junk Citations Have Discredited the Academy: Part 4”]

However, a deeper transformation is needed to solve the problem. In its papal bull on citation malpractice, *Proceedings of the Royal Society A* noted that “a large and growing factor in how the world makes decisions is the Dunning-Kruger effect,” in which scholars “seek to cherry-pick the science and dismiss science that is inconvenient to them.” Junk citations arose, they noted, because too many scholars are captured by the ideological premises of

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their work. This points both to the nature of the problem and to the obvious solution.

The Dunning–Kruger effect refers to a study published in 1999 by two (middle-aged, white, male, heterosexual, gender-conforming) scholars, David Dunning and Justin Kruger. In four laboratory surveys, groups of between 45 and 140 Cornell undergraduates were asked to evaluate their own abilities with respect to humor, logical reasoning, and English grammar. The famous conclusion of the study was that “incompetent individuals, compared with their more competent peers, will dramatically overestimate their ability and performance relative to objective criteria.”

Their study has been widely cited (incorrectly) to justify the tyranny of experts. But, if you read it, they note in the conclusion that “competence is not wholly dependent on knowledge or wisdom” within a given field. Indeed, “knowledge about the domain does not necessarily translate into competence” at all.

Obviously, an expert on Rembrandt cannot paint like Rembrandt. But there is a second disconnect between knowledge and competence: an expert on Rembrandt is not competent to decide whether her interpretation of his work is correct. Subject expertise does not confer scientific competence. Indeed, the more “expert” one becomes, the more wedded one is to one’s ideological frame. The only way to ensure the competence of the scientific endeavor is to have a multitude of competing scholars with deep disagreements on fundamental ideological or paradigmatic premises. Only then will scholars be forced to read and cite the

work of others correctly, as well as challenge the citations used by others. An intellectual monoculture spawns bad science, and junk citations are merely one consequence.

[Related: “How Junk Citations Have Discredited the Academy: Part 3”]

I began this series by recalling a grant applicant who had lazily cited a research paper without telling the reader anything about the methods and specific findings of the paper, a classic junk citation. The reason for this junk citation was simple: the applicant shared the ideological premises of the paper’s author and had no incentive to actually read it, much less double-check the validity of the findings.

Similarly, in a recent presentation I made on a new paper making the case against pay equity policies, I noted that about 80% of research on the topic is carried out by female academics who already believe that gender pay differences are caused by sexism and that pay equity policies are a really great idea. Yet their evidence is weak to none, and their papers are chock full of citations to each other’s “well-known” findings. The near-total absence of critical debate on this central labor policy has inflated an epistemic bubble that could soar into the stratosphere.

That, in a nutshell, points the way to reform. Scientific progress depends on a contest of ideas, a contest of scholars with diametrically opposing views who have the incentive to scrutinize the work of others, including any citations they use to bolster their case. Absent a pluralism of viewpoints, or paradigms, science is impossible. Junk citations, from this

perspective, are simply the rust on the ship, the encrustation of barnacles and seaweed that grows because the hull is not properly coated.

It's time to drydock the Good Ship Academia and refit it with a thick coating of intellectual pluralism.

Image: [Adobe Stock](#)

Discussion

KATHLEEN LOWREY [April 11, 2023](#)

My own feeling is the solution to this problem is emerging “organically”. I genuinely no longer expect to find the academic literature in my discipline interesting — I’m pleasantly surprised when it is, but I no longer *expect* it to be. That doesn’t mean I’ve taken up quilting instead. There is a tremendous amount of fascinating, insightful social scientific analysis — including anthropological analysis — available to read on Substack and elsewhere. I just read that stuff and am currently working on a book ms. much more influenced by the recent para-academic literature than the recent academic literature.

I saw it on Twitter, so I can’t credit it properly, but someone made a nice point about power and authority sometimes aligning and sometimes being orthogonal. The kind of self-dealing citation bafflegabbery so well analyzed in this series currently commands a lot of institutional power. It is absolutely hemorrhaging authority. When it was just a smug steady trickle, I was quite pessimistic about the situation but the more firehosey it becomes the cheerier I feel about the likelihood that I’ll get to see