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Humanities and Social Sciences Books of Ten National Disciplinary Associations, 2000–2009

Stephen E. Wiberley Jr.

abstract: Books are the most important medium of communication in the humanities, a major medium in the social sciences, and a central component of academic library collections. This study examined humanities and social sciences books that won prizes from ten leading United States disciplinary associations between 2000 and 2009. The study extends earlier research for the 1990s. It reports substantial interest by most disciplines in books about subjects classified in other disciplines; dominance of university presses over commercial publishers in prizes won; and, between 2012 and 2014, great growth in library holdings of electronic versions of prizewinners.

Introduction

Transformed by technology, scholarly communication is changing rapidly, yet the book remains the central medium of communication in the humanities and, to a significant, if lesser, extent in the social sciences.¹ Electronic books are becoming a larger part of academic library collections, but print books remain important. Thus, it is valuable to know the extent to which libraries are adding electronic versions of books compared to print books. Attributes of scholarly books can also tell us about trends in the academic disciplines and in publishing. Distribution of library classifications assigned to books that disciplines value provides a measure of interest in subjects within and beyond the discipline. Findings about publishers speak to the performance of university and commercial presses, concentrations in academic publishing, and the strength of different presses in different disciplines. Given changes in technology, the disciplines, and publishing, it is worthwhile to chart the course of books in the humanities and social sciences, especially through research that compares to earlier studies.

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While not without limitations, the study of the books awarded prizes, especially prizes from leading scholarly associations in given disciplines, is one of the best ways to learn about academic books.

The present article investigates one type of book in the humanities and social sciences—the prizewinner—for the years 2000 to 2009. While not without limitations, the study of the books awarded prizes, especially prizes from leading scholarly associations in given disciplines, is one of the best ways to learn about academic books. By using prize-winners, the investigator has, in effect, studied an authoritative organizational selection of the topics and publishers that are important in a field. This saves the investigator from identifying topics and publishers that are appropriate for a study, gathering a population that covers both, and then sampling from that population. While prizewinning books have a mark of prestige not held by other scholarly books and form only a small portion of all scholarly books, some findings about prizewinners may apply to non-prizewinners. Other results provide grounds for comparisons and starting points for further research.

Literature Review

The present study compares its findings to those in similar studies for the 1990s by the same author, Stephen Wiberley Jr.² His studies use characteristics of the prizewinners to shed light on achievements by institutions and publishers, differences and commonalities among disciplines, extent of library print holdings, and the rise of the electronic book. Other studies of prizewinning books have taken different approaches. Elisabeth Clemens and her colleagues studied characteristics of nominees for a book prize in sociology and related their findings to characteristics of journal article publishing and the careers of authors in the discipline.³ James English analyzed the economy of cultural prizes, many awarded to books.⁴ Joel Best explored the awarding of prizes to books in sociology and presented an overall interpretation of the phenomenon of awarding of prizes. He observed the tendency for the number of prizes to grow, as interest groups increase in number and use prizes to promote their agendas.⁵

Librarians have used library classification to investigate the range of subjects relevant to different disciplines. William McGrath first used the term *ethnocentricity* to characterize the extent to which scholars in a field used books within the range of classification numbers associated with that discipline.⁶ Other scholars followed, including Stephen Bulick, who conducted a detailed investigation for the social sciences.⁷ More recently, Paul Metz followed up on his book *Landscape of Literatures* with a comparable, if briefer, analysis of borrowing from an entire library collection.⁸

The library classification numbers assigned to prizewinners tell us what subjects members of a discipline focus on. The more a discipline's prizewinners fall within the classification area assigned to that discipline, the more ethnocentric it is.⁹

Scholarly publishers, including both university presses and commercial houses, are a central concern of libraries. The work of Albert Greco and his colleagues has shown that commercial presses produce far more academic books than university presses. In general,



commercial publishers charge higher prices and raise their prices more frequently than university presses.¹⁰ Greco's work also points to a future when scholarly publishers will gain much more of their revenue from sales of electronic editions.¹¹

Research Questions

Given previous research on prizewinning books, the degree of ethnocentricity in different disciplines, differences between commercial publishers and university presses, and the expected growth in importance of electronic books, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent did prizewinners for a disciplinary association fall within the library classification for the discipline?
2. What were the proportions of prizewinners published by university presses and by commercial publishers? Did the leading publishers of the 1990s continue to hold sway in the 2000s, and did some publishers dominate publishing in certain disciplines?
3. How did the number of print holdings of humanities prizewinners in libraries compare to the number of print holdings for social sciences prizewinners, and did the difference between the two change between the 1990s and the 2000s?
4. What was the change between the 1990s and the 2000s in the proportion of prizewinners available in electronic editions?
5. What were the rates of growth in both print and electronic holdings?

Data Gathered

Like the author's earlier studies, the present article investigates prizewinners from four leading American scholarly associations in the humanities—the American Historical Association, the American Musicological Society, the College Art Association, and the Modern Language Association—and from six leading associations in the social sciences—the American Anthropological Association, the American Educational Research Association, the Association of American Geographers, the American Political Science Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Sociological Association.

To gather data for this study, the author and his assistants first went to the websites of the associations in the study and systematically searched for lists of prizes that associations and their sections or divisions gave. Humanities associations award prizes at the association level and list all their prizes in one place.¹² Social sciences associations give prizes at the association level, the division/section level, or at both levels. So, the research team examined social sciences association websites at both levels for lists of prizes. The examination covered websites for four humanities associations, six social sciences associations, and more than 250 social sciences association sections and divisions, 90 of which awarded prizes. The author supplemented systematic website searching with a selective review of other sources, such as newsletters from the associations and their sections or divisions. Initial identification of prizes and winners began as early as 2005, but most identification occurred from early 2010 through the middle of 2011. From



April through mid-July 2012, the author comprehensively reviewed association websites to identify prizes either missed or not previously listed.

With lists of prizes in hand, the author and his assistants sought data about prize-winners from the Web and from WorldCat, the world's largest library catalog, operated by OCLC (Online Computer Library Center). If not given in the associations' listings of prizes, data sought from the Web included the book's publisher and date of publication. WorldCat supplied Library of Congress and Dewey Decimal classification numbers. During two periods, June and July 2012 and December 2013 through June 2014, the researcher and an assistant gathered from WorldCat the number of libraries attaching their holdings to records for print or electronic versions of the prizewinner. The researcher and assistant also noted, in 2012, the suppliers or sources of the electronic versions.

Scholarly associations establish prizes—for example, the Modern Language Association's Prize for a First Book—and then award them to individual books—for example,

Ira Berlin's *Generations of Captivity*, winner of the American Historical Association's Albert J. Beveridge Award in 2003. The present study refers to the former as *prizes*, the latter as *prizewinners*. The number of prizes increased substantially between the 1990s and the 2000s. The growth was 28 percent in the humanities (from 43 to 55) and 70 percent in the social sciences (from 66 to 112). The increase in the number of prizewinners was even greater: 46 percent in the humanities (from 328 to 480) and 131 percent in the social sciences (from 412 to 952, see Table 1). Counts

The number of prizes increased substantially between the 1990s and the 2000s. The growth was 28 percent in the humanities (from 43 to 55) and 70 percent in the social sciences (from 66 to 112).

of prizewinners include both books given a prize and books granted other recognition, such as an honorable mention. The present article includes honorable mentions to make the findings comparable to Wiberley's earlier studies. In their increases, the humanities and, much more, the social sciences strikingly illustrate the trend toward proliferation of awards explored by Best.¹³

Subject Distribution of Prizewinners

To analyze the subject distribution of the prizewinners, the author examined the Library of Congress Classifications assigned to humanities prizewinners and the Dewey Decimal Classifications to social sciences prizewinners. Dewey Decimal Classification is arguably a better fit for the social sciences, because Library of Congress Classification tends to place social science books in classifications C through F when a social science study took place in a particular geographic area. The distribution of classification numbers assigned to the prizewinners measures how ethnocentric an association is and to what extent its prize committees look outside the discipline. In the 1990s, the humanities were far more discipline-centered than the social sciences. The same difference holds for 2000 to 2009, although it is less pronounced. In the 1990s, humanities associations (except for the American Historical Association, which represents a field sometimes considered a social science) awarded the overwhelming majority of their prizes to books classified

Table 1.

Numbers of prizes and prizewinners, 1990–1999 and 2000–2009, by association

Association	1990–1999		2000–2009		Percentage change	
	Prizes	Prizewinners	Prizes	Prizewinners	Prizes	Prizewinners
Humanities						
American Historical Association (AHA)	22	145	24	186	9%	28%
American Musicological Society (AMS)	1	13	7	47	600%	292%
College Art Association (CAA)	2	22	2	21	0%	–5%
Modern Language Association (MLA)	18	148	22	226	22%	53%
Humanities totals	43	328	55	480	28%	46%
Social sciences						
American Anthropological Association (AAA)	8	72	23	163	188%	126%
American Educational Research Association (AERA)	3	16	6	51	100%	219%
Association American Geographers (AAG)	3	14	8	42	167%	200%
American Political Science Association (APSA)	24	154	33	331	38%	115%
American Psychological Association (APA)	4	15	3	35	–25%	133%
American Sociological Association (ASA)	24	141	39	330	63%	134%
Social sciences totals	66	412	112	952	70%	131%

Counts of prizewinners are to individual books and include those for books that won more than one prize and books recognized for honorable mention. Sources for 1990s are Stephen E. Wiberley Jr., "The Humanities: Who Won the '90s in Scholarly Book Publishing," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 2, 3 (2002): 358; and Stephen E. Wiberley Jr., "The Social Sciences: Who Won the '90s in Scholarly Book Publishing," *College & Research Libraries* 65, 6 (2004): 507.

Table 2.
Subject distribution of humanities associations' prizewinners by Library of Congress Classification

Library of Congress Classification	Awarding association					
	College Art Association (CAA)		American Historical Association (AHA)		Modern Language Association (MLA)	
	1990–1999	2000–2009	1990–1999	2000–2009	1990–1999	2000–2009
Art history						
N–NX	91%	76%	1%	3%	1%	2%
History						
C–CF	0%	10%	48%	49%	11%	12%
Language and literature						
P–PZ	5%	0%	1%	2%	73%	67%
Musicology						
M–MT	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Social sciences						
G–LT	0%	5%	41%	30%	5%	7%
Other	5%	10%	9%	16%	8%	11%

Not all column percentages add up to 100 because of rounding. 1990s percentages from Stephen E. Wiberley Jr., “The Humanities: Who Won the ‘90s in Scholarly Book Publishing,” *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 2, 3 (2002): 365.
Bold denotes percentages for discipline’s classification.



within their discipline. The College Art Association and the American Musicological Society awarded more than 90 percent of their 1990s prizes to books classified in N–NX and M–MT, respectively; the Modern Language Association gave 73 percent of its prizes to books in P–PZ (Wiberley, “The Humanities,” 365). In the 2000s, the percentages were College Art Association, 76 percent; American Musicological Society, 93 percent; and Modern Language Association, 67 percent. The American Historical Association remained virtually unchanged: 48 percent in the 1990s, 49 percent in the 2000s (see Table 2).

Except for education (the American Educational Research Association), no social sciences field looked within itself for prizewinners as much as most humanities fields did (see Table 3). While 76 percent of American Educational Research Association prizes were classified in 370–79, only 42 percent of prizes awarded by the American Anthropological Association were classified in 300–309 and 390–99. A mere 5 percent of Association of American Geographers prizes were classified in 910–19. A slight majority of award winners from the American Political Science Association (58 percent), the American Psychological Association (51 percent), and the American Sociological Association (52 percent) fell within the Dewey Decimal Classification areas associated with their disciplines. Compared to the 1990s, American Anthropological Association and Association of American Geographers prizewinners within the discipline dropped markedly (60 percent to 42 percent and 14 percent to 5 percent, respectively), while prizewinners from the American Psychological Association rose substantially (33 percent to 51 percent). The American Educational Research Association (69 percent to 76 percent), the American Political Science Association (54 percent to 58 percent), and the American Sociological Association (53 percent to 52 percent) changed only slightly or remained largely unchanged (Wiberley, “The Social Sciences,” 513). The results, then, are mixed, but overall show no retreat from attention in the social sciences disciplines to matters outside their own disciplines.

In the 1990s, humanities associations (except for the American Historical Association, which represents a field sometimes considered a social science) awarded the overwhelming majority of their prizes to books classified within their discipline.

Publishers

Most prizewinners had only one publisher, but 32 prizewinners had more than one. In the present analysis, all publishers received credit for a prize awarded to a book with more than one publisher. For example, Princeton University Press published *The Art of the American Snapshot, 1888–1978* in association with the National Gallery of Art. Both Princeton and the National Gallery receive credit as publishers. Among the publishers whose books were awarded prizes, university presses overwhelm commercial and other types

Except for education (the American Educational Research Association), no social sciences field looked within itself for prizewinners as much as most humanities fields did



of publishers (for example, foundations like the Russell Sage Foundation or museums like the Art Institute of Chicago). This was also true in the 1990s, when 82 percent of the prizes went to university press books. In the 2000s, university presses won 1,184 prizes or 81 percent, while commercial and other publishers won 280 or 19 percent. The dominance of university presses is even more striking in light of their output compared to commercial presses. Greco provides data for the decade showing that university presses produce fewer books than do commercial publishers. For 2000 to 2010, for book categories reported by Greco that fall within the disciplines included in the present study, there were 97,364 books published, but university presses published only 24,083 (25 percent).¹⁴ Elsewhere, Greco and his colleagues assumed that “there was no qualitative difference between books released by university presses and by commercial scholarly publishing firms.”¹⁵ If prizes awarded by national scholarly associations are a valid indication of quality, this assumption does not stand. Given their volume of publication, commercial books should receive three times more prizes than university press books. Instead, awards to university press books outnumber those to commercial publishers by more than four to one.

Comparison of 2000s data with Wiberley’s findings for the humanities in the 1990s shows great stability among the top publishers (see Table 4). Of the top 18 publishers in the humanities in the 1990s, only the University of Texas Press did not make the top 18 for the 2000s. Stability was not as great among leading publishers in the social sciences in the 1990s, but it was still significant, particularly among the top ten. Only one publisher in the top ten for the 1990s, Temple University Press, dropped below tenth, but it still finished among the top 20 for the 2000s. Duke University Press, not listed for the 1990s, ranked seventh for the 2000s, a remarkable rise. In all, there were five new publishers among the top 20 in the social sciences for the 2000s.

One way to measure the dominance of leading prizewinning publishers over a given subject area is to determine what percentage of prizes the top 20 percent of these publishers won. In the humanities in the 1990s, the top 20 percent of the prizewinning publishers won 72 percent of the prizes. In the 2000s, the top 20 percent of the publishers received 75 percent. In the social sciences in the 1990s, the top 20 percent of the prizewinning publishers won 67 percent of the prizes, but in the 2000s, the top 20 percent took 79 percent of the prizes. The greater concentration in the social sciences in the 2000s derives largely from the increased dominance of four leading publishers: Cambridge University Press, the University of Chicago Press, Princeton University Press, and the University of California Press. Between 1990 and 1999, the four won 35 percent of the prizes. Between 2000 and 2009, they won 45 percent of the prizes.

A publisher’s dominance overall depends on its strength in particular disciplines. In disciplines awarding more than 100 prizes, the three publishers that received the most prizes showed remarkable success. In political science, Cambridge (83 prizes), Princeton (65), and Chicago (33) won 55 percent of the 331 prizes. In sociology, Chicago (57), California (44), and Cambridge (37) won 42 percent of the 330 prizes. In literature and languages, Chicago (25), Duke (16), and Oxford (16) won 25 percent of the 226 prizes. In history, Harvard (21), Oxford (19), and Cambridge (17) won 31 percent of the 186 prizes. In anthropology, California (32) and Duke (18) were the top two, with Chicago (15) and Princeton (15) tied for third. The 65 prizes for three publishers comprise 40 percent of



Table 4.

Publishers awarded most prizes, 1990–1999 and 2000–2009

Humanities, 1990–1999 Publisher (number of prizes/ percentage of prizes)	Humanities, 2000–2009 Publisher (number of prizes/ percentage of prizes)	Social sciences, 1990–1999 Publisher (number of prizes/ percentage of prizes)	Social sciences, 2000–2009 Publisher (number of prizes/ percentage of prizes)
California (27/8%)	Chicago (44/9%)	Chicago (40/10%)	Cambridge (129/14%)
Cambridge (26/8%)	Oxford (41/9%)	Princeton (38/9%)	Chicago (109/11%)
Princeton (23/7%)	California (34/7%)	California (36/9%)	Princeton (108/11%)
Cornell (21/6%)	Cambridge (32/7%)	Cambridge (29/7%)	California (82/9%)
Chicago (20/6%)	Harvard (28/6%)	Harvard (28/7%)	Harvard (45/5%)
Oxford (17/5%)	Yale (27/6%)	Yale (25/6%)	Oxford (33/3%)
North Carolina (16/5%)	Duke (20/4%)	Oxford (18/4%)	Duke (30/3%)
Stanford (16/5%)	Princeton (20/4%)	Cornell (17/4%)	Russell Sage (27/3%)
Johns Hopkins (15/5%)	Stanford (20/4%)	Temple (10/2%)	Routledge (20/2%)
Harvard (12/4%)	North Carolina (18/4%)	Routledge (8/2%)	Cornell (19/2%)
Duke (8/2%)	Cornell (14/3%)	Illinois (7/2%)	Yale (19/2%)
Nebraska (8/2%)	Toronto (13/3%)	Johns Hopkins (7/2%)	MIT (18/2%)
Yale (8/2%)	Johns Hopkins (8/2%)	Kansas (7/2%)	Stanford (16/2%)
Michigan (6/1%)	Columbia (7/1%)	Michigan (7/2%)	Columbia (14/1%)
Columbia (4/1%)	Minnesota (7/1%)	Minnesota (7/2%)	Johns Hopkins (12/1%)
Minnesota (4/1%)	Pennsylvania (7/1%)	Basic Books (6/1%)	Rutgers (11/1%)
Norton (4/1%)	Nebraska (6/1%)	Columbia (6/1%)	Rowman & Littlefield (10/1%)
Texas (4/1%)	Norton (6/1%)	Russell Sage (6/1%)	Temple (10/1%)
	Michigan (5/1%)	SUNY (6/1%)	Kansas (9/1%)
	MIT (5/1%)	Westview (6/1%)	Minnesota (9/1%)

Publishers in **bold** listed for both decades for a given disciplinary area.

Sources for 1990–1999: Stephen E. Wiberley Jr., “The Humanities: Who Won the ’90s in Scholarly Book Publishing,” *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 2, 3 (2002): 363; Stephen E. Wiberley Jr., “The Social Sciences: Who Won the ’90s in Scholarly Book Publishing,” *College & Research Libraries* 65, 6 (2004): 512.



the total 163 prizes. Because publishers often market e-books in packages, sometimes by subject and by publisher, by taking into account the publishers that dominated different disciplines, library selectors can make informed judgments about which packages to buy.

Library Holdings of Prizewinners, 2012

Print Books

Observers have attributed the crisis of the scholarly monograph to academic libraries spending more on scientific, technical, and medical journals and less on humanities and social sciences books. Diminished library acquisitions of books forced publishers to decrease the number of scholarly monographs they publish and the number of units per title.¹⁶ Research by Anna Perrault and by John Budd and Catherine Craven that analyzed the OCLC database shows declines in library acquisitions of books, but those studies cover 1985 to 1991 and 1984 to 1995, respectively.¹⁷ Further, data on library holdings of prizewinners gathered by Wiberley in 2004 from OCLC's WorldCat for the 1990s and data gathered by the present study in 2012 for the 2000s cannot be compared, because it is not possible to adjust counts of holdings for differences in the number of libraries reporting holdings in 2003 and in 2012. OCLC annual reports do give numbers of members in both years, but, in 2009, the definition of membership changed. From 1990 through June 30, 2009, the definition of members was libraries that "contributed all of their current cataloging online or supplied current cataloging information to OCLC by computer tape or file."¹⁸ On July 1, 2009, the definition became "any library, archive or museum that contractually agrees to contribute intellectual content to the OCLC cooperative or share resources with it."¹⁹ As a result, after July 1, 2009, libraries could become members without contributing their cataloging information, for example, by "sharing staff resources and expertise, such as in a reference cooperative."²⁰ On July 1, 2009, OCLC reported its membership, under the old definition, as 11,810, with 3,643 college and university library members.²¹ On July 1, 2010, under its new definition, OCLC reported its membership as 26,704, with 5,107 college and university library members.²² College and university libraries presumably held the vast majority of copies of the prizewinning books. After the change in the definition of an OCLC member, the number of all members rose 126 percent, while the number of college and university library members climbed only 40 percent. Throughout the period 1990 to 2010, the median annual increase in the number of all members was 3 percent, while the rise in the number of college and university library members was 4 percent. The change in the definition of membership made such a great and indeterminate difference in the number of libraries reporting their holdings that comparison between holdings counted in 2004 and holdings counted in 2012 is impossible.

While complicating factors may limit comparison between decades, it is possible to compare the difference in holdings within decades—that is, between holdings of prize-winning books in the humanities and in the social sciences in the 1990s with holdings of prizewinning books in the humanities and in the social sciences in the 2000s. Such comparisons are possible because the investigators gathered data for each decade and for the two disciplinary groups of books at the same time.²³ For the 1990s, Wiberley found



(using data gathered in 2004) that the mean number of print holdings for social sciences prizewinning books was 564 and the median was 454 (see Table 5). The comparable numbers for the humanities were 482 and 378, making the holdings of social sciences prize-winners 17 percent and 20 percent greater, respectively (Wiberley, "The Social Sciences," 516). For the 2000s, according to data gathered in 2012, the mean number of holdings for social sciences prizewinning books was 503, the median 423. The comparable numbers for the humanities were 488 and 391, making the social sciences 3 percent and 8 percent greater, respectively. In other words, books in the humanities seemed to gain ground on books in the social sciences during the 2000s.

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Electronic Books

The discussion that follows covers two aspects of electronic versions of the prizewinning books: (1) the proportion of books in electronic format, and (2) library holdings of electronic versions. As with printed books, the discussion here covers data that the study team gathered in 2012.

To put the proportion of books in electronic format in historical perspective: less than one-fifth of the social sciences prizewinning books of the 1990s had electronic versions at the time Wiberley studied them in 2004. Only the University of California Press had more than ten titles in electronic format. California offered 25 of 71 social sciences prizewinners in electronic format. Data gathered in 2001 showed that California provided 22 of 49 humanities prizewinners in electronic format (Wiberley, "The Social Sciences," 518; Wiberley, "The Humanities," 370). Netlibrary dominated distribution of prizewinning e-books listed in OCLC. As one would expect, the picture for electronic versions of prizewinners of the 2000s is very different.

To measure the proportion of 2000–2009 prizewinning books that had electronic versions in 2012, the study team noted whether a book had one or more records designated as "internet" in WorldCat. The team then counted the total number of holdings attached to such Internet records for a given title and recorded the providers or repositories for the electronic versions. An aggregator or publisher had provided 60 percent of the prize-winning books, more than three times the percentage for the 1990s prizewinners (see Table 6). HathiTrust or Google Books digitized another 14 percent that an aggregator or publisher did not provide, although copyright restrictions made these unavailable to libraries. It is worth noting that HathiTrust and Google Books postdate the time of data collection for the 1990s prizewinners. An aggregator or publisher was more likely to provide electronic versions of recent books, although the rise was not steady. The provider or archive associated with the most books was ebrary (647 books). After ebrary came EBSCO, which took over Netlibrary (568 books); myiLibrary (400); EBL (Ebook Library, 325); HathiTrust (313); Google (276); ACLS (American Council of Learned Societies) Humanities E-Book (83); Cambridge (51); and OverDrive (49).

Regarding library holdings of electronic versions of books, for a variety of reasons—including lack of rights for interlibrary lending of an electronic version, use of vendor

Table 5.

Library holdings in 2012 of print copies of 2000–2009 prizewinning books compared to library holdings in 2004 of print copies of 1990–1999 prizewinning books

		Humanities	Social sciences	Percentage difference humanities vs. social sciences
Mean print holdings	1990–1999*	482	564	17%
	2000–2009†	488	503	3%
Median print holdings	1990–1999*	378	454	20%
	2000–2009†	391	423	8%

*Data gathered April 2004. All data for 1990–1999 from Stephen E. Wiberley Jr., “The Social Sciences: Who Won the ’90s in Scholarly Book Publishing,” *College & Research Libraries* 65, 6 (2004): 516.

†Data gathered June–July 2012.

records, lack of OCLC records to catalog electronic versions, lack of perpetual access to a book—libraries that have access to an electronic version do not necessarily attach their symbol to an OCLC record for that book.²⁴ Thus, the counts of electronic holdings give less sense of the accessibility through libraries of electronic versions than do the counts of holdings for print versions. Nevertheless, electronic holdings give a comparative sense and indicate, overall, that social sciences prizewinning books are more available electronically than those in the humanities. Here we compare the books published be-

Social sciences prizewinning books are more available electronically than those in the humanities.

tween 1997 and 2009. The analysis does not include 38 pre-1997 social sciences imprints, because there is no pre-1997 imprint among humanities prizewinners. The analysis reports only mean holdings. Because many prizewinning books have no electronic holdings, median holdings have little meaning. Mean holdings of humanities e-versions are 124 and social sciences 142, a difference of 15 percent (see Table 7).

The 15 percentage point difference aligns with 1990s social sciences prizewinners having 17 percent greater print holdings than humanities prizewinners and may discount the narrowing of difference in mean print holdings between the 1990s and the 2000s. At

Table 6.
Prizewinning books in e-format, 2000–2009, by year of publication

Year of publication	Total number of books	Books in e-format				Total percentage in e-format
		Available from aggregator or publisher*	Percentage available from aggregator or publisher	Archived in HathiTrust or Google Books only	Percentage in an archive only	
Pre-1997	38	7	18%	16	42%	60%
1997	11	8	73%	2	18%	91%
1998	22	9	41%	7	32%	73%
1999	69	42	61%	9	13%	74%
2000	98	47	48%	16	16%	64%
2001	116	63	54%	23	20%	74%
2002	108	55	51%	14	13%	64%
2003	132	90	68%	13	10%	78%
2004	145	86	59%	18	12%	71%
2005	131	83	63%	14	11%	74%
2006	128	81	63%	15	12%	75%
2007	133	97	73%	19	14%	87%
2008	121	86	71%	13	11%	82%
2009	34	23	68%	2	6%	74%
Total	1286	777	60%	181	14%	74%

*Books available from an aggregator or publisher may also be in an archive.

Table 7.

Library holdings in 2012 of electronic versions of 2000–2009 prizewinning books*

	Humanities	Social sciences	Percentage difference humanities vs. social sciences
Mean holdings	124	142	15%
Percentage of prizewinning books with greater electronic than print holdings	13%	11%	2%

*Data gathered June–July 2012.

the same time, 11 percent of social sciences prizewinners and 13 percent of humanities prizewinners had more electronic than print holdings.

Finally, comparison by area of scholarship, using Library of Congress Classification and Dewey Decimal Classification, shows that aggregators and publishers provided a greater percentage of social sciences prizewinning books (64 percent) than humanities

Books classified as psychology or education are especially likely to be available in electronic versions, with titles offered in electronic versions outnumbering those available only in print by more than two to one.

prizewinning books (56 percent) in electronic versions (see table 8). Books classified as psychology or education are especially likely to be available in electronic versions, with titles offered in electronic versions outnumbering those available only in print by more than two to one. In the 1990s, none of seven books classified as art history and only one in five classified as musicology was available electronically (Wiberley, “The Humanities,” 370–71). In the 2000s, a majority (23 of 42) of books in music were offered electronically, but

less than 20 percent (4 of 25) of books in art history were available in that form. Technical concerns and the difficulty of gaining rights to reproduce images have limited creation of electronic versions of art history books.²⁵



Table 8.

Electronic versions of 2000–2009 prizewinning books from aggregators and publishers by Library of Congress Classification for humanities and Dewey Decimal Classification for social sciences

Disciplinary area	Total number of books in area	Books without e-versions	Books with e-versions	Percentage with e-version
Art history: N–NX	25	21	4	16%
History: C–F	229	92	137	60%
Language and literature: P–PZ	162	70	92	57%
Musicology: M–MT / 780–89	42	19	23	55%
Humanities total	458	202	256	56%
Anthropology: 300–309,* 390–99	320	119	201	63%
Education: 370–79	54	15	39	72%
Geography: 910–19	2	1	1	50%
Political science: 320–29, 340–59	242	90	152	63%
Psychology: 150–59	24	7	17	71%
Sociology: 300–309,* 360–69	382	138	244	64%
Social sciences total*	709	253	456	64%

*300–309 included in both anthropology and sociology, but only once in social sciences total.

Growth in Library Holdings, 2012 to 2014

Because attention to e-books has grown rapidly, it seemed worthwhile to recheck in 2014 library holdings of electronic versions as well as print versions of prizewinners. The team gathered data from late December 2013 through late March 2014 for all but about 50 books, which were checked in early June 2014. Between 2012 and 2014, overall OCLC membership fell 25 percent, but college and university members increased by 5 percent.²⁶ The proportion of books available electronically grew from 60 percent in 2012 to 68 percent in 2014. Based on association awards, not library classification, the growth among humanities prizewinners was 56 to 62 percent, while that among social sciences prizewinners was 64 to 72 percent (see Table 9). The percentage of social sciences prize-winners with more electronic than print holdings increased from 11 percent in 2012 to 30 percent in 2014. Humanities prizewinners with more electronic than print holdings



grew from 13 percent to 28 percent. Most impressive is the overall growth of holdings of the two formats. Print holdings for all prizewinning books rose 2.3 percent. In contrast,

Print holdings for all prizewinning books rose 2.3 percent. In contrast, electronic holdings jumped 143.1 percent.

electronic holdings jumped 143.1 percent. Print holdings of social sciences prizewinners rose 2.5 percent, those of humanities winners 2.0 percent. Electronic holdings for social sciences prizewinners increased 142.4 percent and those for humanities winners 144.8 percent. In 2012, the mean holdings of social sciences prizewinners available electronically were 142; in 2014,

they were 345. The comparable mean holdings for humanities prizewinners available electronically were 124 in 2012 and 303 in 2014. The growth in print and electronic holdings points to the time that it takes for a book to become known and acquired by libraries. The great growth in electronic holdings also points to the fact that electronic books, unlike print, can be purchased in packages and that demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) programs have made older electronic books available for patron selection.

The rates of growth in print and electronic holdings relate to two points made by Greco and his coauthors. First, in 2012, Greco and his colleagues projected that between 2010 and 2015, revenues for digital books would grow 1,075 percent for university presses and 143 percent for professional and scholarly commercial presses.²⁷ The 2012–2014 increase in library holdings for electronic versions of pre-2010 imprints fits the direction of those trends. Second, Greco and colleagues found that university presses, over time, do not raise prices on their books as much as commercial publishers do. From this finding, they claim that university presses leave money on the table.²⁸ Data gathered for the present article provide evidence that library sales occur well after publication, pointing to one market segment where revenue is lost. The fact a book may sell years after publication also points to the importance of publishers' ongoing promotion of their books.²⁹

Conclusion

The present study provides interesting comparisons between the humanities and social sciences, the range of subject interests in different disciplines, and, perhaps most telling, evidence of the growth of e-books. To be sure, prizewinners are, by the national recognition they have received, not typical academic books. But their subject coverage indicates the topics that experts in the disciplines think are relevant and important, and comparisons among them may well point to directions other academic books are taking. Findings from this study can help structure future investigations of humanities and social sciences books and provide hypotheses to test in those investigations.

By most measures of library holdings reported in the present article, libraries hold more copies of social sciences prizewinners, especially electronic versions, than copies of humanities prizewinners. Mean holdings of both print and electronic versions of prizewinners are greater for the social sciences than for the humanities. The proportion of prizewinners available electronically for the social sciences exceeds that for the humanities. While, in 2012, a higher percentage of humanities prizewinners had greater electronic than print holdings, by 2014, the social sciences had taken the lead. On the other

Table 9.
Indicators of change between 2012 and 2014 in libraries' print and electronic holdings of 2000–2009 prizewinners

	Mean holdings of prizewinning books		Percentage of prizewinners available electronically		Percentage of prizewinners with greater electronic than print holdings		Growth of all print and electronic holdings between 2012 and 2014	
	2012*	2014†	2012	2014	2012	2014	Percentage change in print	Percentage change in electronic
Humanities	124	303	56%	62%	13%	28%	2.0%	144.8%
Social sciences	142	345	64%	72%	11%	30%	2.5%	142.4%
All			60%	68%	11%	29%	2.3%	143.1%

* 2012 data gathered June–July 2012.

† 2014 data gathered December 2013–June 2014.



hand, in 2012, median library print holdings of 2000s social sciences prizewinners were 8 percent more than print holdings of 2000s humanities prizewinners, while in the 1990s the difference was 20 percent. Between 2012 and 2014, electronic holdings of humanities prizewinners increased at a slightly greater rate than social sciences prizewinners (144.8 percent versus 142.4 percent).

This article's findings raise two interesting issues for those who would analyze other populations of humanities and social sciences books. First, and perhaps most important,

By most measures of library holdings reported in the present article, libraries hold more copies of social sciences prizewinners, especially electronic versions, than copies of humanities prizewinners.

is the finding that usually a large percentage of books awarded prizes by a scholarly association fall outside the classification for the discipline. An investigator could, with considerable confidence, study musicology books using just books classified in Library of Congress Classification's M–MT. For most other disciplines, the classification area for that discipline covers roughly 60 percent or less of the books that prize juries consider outstanding in the discipline. Any

study that restricts itself to the classification area for a discipline will need to acknowledge its limitation.

Second, Greco and his colleagues have shown that, over a wide range of fields in the humanities and social sciences, commercial publishers produce far more books than university presses. Yet books from university presses win prizes far more often than the larger population of commercial publishers' books. This predominance of university press books is reason for studies of non-prizewinners to analyze samples with larger proportions of university press than commercial books.

The great increase between 2012 and 2014 of library holdings of electronic versions of the preceding decade's prizewinning books suggests that the launch in 2011 and 2012 of university press e-book initiatives made a difference. These initiatives included Oxford's

Commercial publishers produce far more books than university presses. Yet books from university presses win prizes far more often than the larger population of commercial publishers' books.

University Press Scholarship Online and Cambridge's University Publishing Online in fall 2011, the University Press Content Consortium on Project MUSE in January 2012, and Books at JSTOR in November 2012.³⁰

The great growth in holdings of electronic versions also raises the question of whether a similar increase occurred among the entire population of humanities and social sciences books published in that decade. Worth ex-

ploring, too, is in what proportions libraries acquired these electronic versions through individual acquisitions and through package purchases. The large numbers in such a short time suggest that many libraries purchased electronic books in packages and set up patron-driven acquisitions programs for older books.

If libraries purchase electronic books through subscription packages, one has to ask whether such a process is sustainable. Libraries have always acquired serials through



subscription, and for research libraries, this has meant enormous price increases. Statistics from the Association of Research Libraries show that, between 1986 and 2011, serial expenditures rose 402 percent. During the same period, monograph expenditures grew only 71 percent, and the Consumer Price Index rose 105 percent.³¹ Even if increases in prices for electronic book subscription packages fall short of the stunning rise in costs of serials, book publishers will likely seek price hikes that exceed the growth in libraries' materials budgets and the increase in the Consumer Price Index. What the future holds is uncertain, but there will likely be strain on libraries and on book publishers, particularly university presses.

In recent years, directors of university presses have expressed confidence that, despite the uncertainty of the future, they and their colleagues will find ways to continue to publish books.³² On the one hand, one can question such confidence, as we enter a time of digital dominance without precedent. On the other hand, as Douglas Armato has pointed out, scholarly publishing has been "in some form of crisis since the late 1970s."³³ Yet it has survived, and the number of monographs purchased by research libraries has risen, even if modestly, from the low point of the 1990s.³⁴ The present study provides findings that can serve as points of comparison in studies of a future about to unfold.

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