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COMMENTARY

Critical comment on: Zhu, Jin, and He 'On evolutionary economic geography: a literature review using bibliometric analysis', *European Planning Studies* vol. 27, pp 639–660

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Zhu, Jin, and He (2019) recently published an article in the journal, entitled 'On evolutionary economic geography: A literature review using bibliometric analysis'. Zhu, Jin, and He stated in 2. Data and methodology that

> We searched the following keywords from the WoS on 13 September 2018: 'evolutionary economic geography', 'related variety', 'unrelated variety', 'regional branching', 'cognitive proximity', 'technological relatedness', 'regional resilience', 'new path creation', 'path breaking', 'path dependent', 'path dependence', 'industrial lock in', 'regional lock in', 'regional innovation system', 'regional system of innovation', 'national innovation system', and 'national system of innovation' (See the Appendix). Based on this searching strategy, 2085 publications that were published before 13 September 2018 and contained these keywords in their titles, abstracts, and keywords were identified.

Results in the original paper (Zhu et al., 2019) cannot be repeated by using the same methods. In total, 9,114 documents including 7,350 articles (81% of 9,114 documents) were found (Data last updated: 10 April 2019). These results show a huge difference from the results in the original paper (Zhu et al., 2019). Zhu, Jin, and He only discussed 2,085 documents (23% of the 9,114 documents) in their study.

In Zhu, Jin, and He's Reply, they noticed that 'we only search in the WoS Core Collection.' Again, results in the original paper (Zhu et al., 2019) cannot be repeated. By using the same searching keywords in the original paper (Zhu et al., 2019) and Web of Science Core Collection, 7,488 documents including 5,866 articles (78% of 7,488 documents) were found from 1900 to 2018 (Data last updated: 10 April 2019). Similarly, these results show a huge difference from the results in the original paper (Zhu et al., 2019). Zhu, Jin, and He only discussed 2,085 documents (28% of the 7,488 documents) in their study.

Web of Science Core Collection includes

Web of Science Core Collection: Citation Indexes includes

(1) Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED)
(2) Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)
(3) Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI)
(4) Conference Proceedings Citation Index – Science (CPCI-S)
(5) Conference Proceedings Citation Index – Social Science & Humanities (CPCI-SSH)
(6) Book Citation Index – Science (BKCI-S)

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(7) Book Citation Index – Social Sciences & Humanities (BKCI-SSH)
(8) Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI)
Web of Science Core Collection: Chemical Indexes
(1) Current Chemical Reactions (CCR-EXPANDED)
(2) Index Chemicus (IC)

Furthermore, it is not appropriate to use all these databases which are not in the same level, for example Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) complements the highly selective indexes by providing earlier visibility for sources under evaluation as part of SCIE, SSCI, and AHCI's rigorous journal selection process (http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/multidisciplinary/esci). Web of Science Core Collection: Chemical Indexes as well as ESCI, CPCI-S CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, and BKCI-SSH are inappropriate for 'On evolutionary economic geography: A literature review using bibliometric analysis' (Zhu et al., 2019).

One appropriate method is to use SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, and A&HCI with searching keywords mentioned in the original paper (Zhu et al., 2019) from 1900 to 2018 (Data last updated: 10 April 2019). This method resulted in 2,299 documents in SCI-EXPANDED, 3,808 documents in SSCI, 193 documents in A&HCI, and 5,435 documents in these three databases.

The Web of Science database is designed for researchers to find published literatures but not used for bibliometric studies (Ho, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). Thus, it is always necessary use an accurate bibliometric treatment when using the Web of Science database (Ho, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). It was pointed out that the documents, which can only be searched out by *KeyWords Plus*, were irrelevant to 'evolutionary economic geography' (Fu & Ho, 2015). Ho's group was the first to propose 'front page' as a filter to improve the bibliometric method (Fu & Ho, 2014; Fu, Wang, & Ho, 2012; Ho & Fu, 2016). Only documents with searching keywords in their 'front page', including the article title, the abstract, and the author keywords were considered. As a result, 4,803 documents (88% of the 5,435 documents) had searching keywords in their 'front page' while 632 documents (12%) did not include any searching keywords in their 'front page'. For example highly cited review with 100 or more total citations from Web of Science Core Collection since publication to the end of 2017 ($TC_{2017} \geq 100$) (Hsu & Ho, 2014), 'From sectoral systems of innovation to socio-technical systems: Insights about dynamics and change from sociology and institutional theory' (Geels, 2004), and highly cited articles 'The limits to scale? Methodological reflections on scalar structuration' (Brenner, 2001), 'Experimental investigation of the lithium-ion battery impedance characteristic at various conditions and aging states and its influence on the application' (Waag, Kabitz, & Sauer, 2013), and 'Ideas and social policy: An institutionalist perspective' (Beland, 2005).

By using the 'front page' as a filter, it will avoid introducing unrelated articles for analysis (Fu et al., 2012; Ho, 2018c). Since any results and discussions depend on the data abstracted by a search filter, an inappropriate filter may lead to inaccurate results and wrong conclusions (Ho, 2018a, 2018c). In recent years, similar rebuttals have also been published in *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* (Ho, 2018a), *Renewable & Sustainable Energy Reviews* (Ho, 2018c), and *Journal of Soils and Sediments* (Ho, 2019).

Research is the way to the truth so that innovations are important to find something new or a new understanding to approach the truth (Ho, 2019). It is necessary to improve a

researcher's use of methods and concepts in order to have accurate results and discussions (Ho, 2019). Zhu et al. (2019) used inappropriate methods to publish bibliometric paper in *European Planning Studies*, this may result in misleading the journal readers (Ho, 2018b, 2019). From my point of view, Zhu, Jin, and He should have understood the Web of Science and thereby providing a greater accuracy and information about their data.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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