The Name Number(s) for Political Science

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In a recent issue of *AIR*,[1] Kevin Krajick pointed out that there are many scientists whose names closely match their fields of study. In doing so he calculated the Name Number (the percentage of such people) for his field, Geology. He challenged readers to mine data bases in their own professions, remarking that "it remains to be seen" whether Name Numbers for other disciplines will out-do geology.

Having made the count for my own field, I can report that political science does not quite reach the plateau set by geology if one considers only names that refer to governmental positions or to concepts studied by the discipline. But if one adds names of holders of governmental positions—even, perhaps, limiting them to heads of countries—then political science soars past geology and may be king of the Hill.

Following the procedures used in Krajick's path-breaking work, I examined the 4,529 names (including those occurring more than once) appearing in the on-line index to the program for the 2005 national conference of the Midwest Political Science Association. Numbers below refer to times the name appears (numbers in parentheses are those of distinct persons):

    6 King (4), 1 King Jr.; 2 Rey (1), 1 DeLeon, 1 Leon, 2 Primo (1)
    2 Pope (1)
    2 Prince (1), 2 Prins (1)
    1 Duke
    1 El Sherif
    3 Khan

    2 Power (1); 2 Powers
    2 Guerra (but no War, and no Peace)
    2 Canon (1)

    1 Wise
    3 Wiseman (1)
    2 Fey (1)
    2 Goodman (1)
    1 Fair
    2 Bliss (1)
    (but no Justice, or Judge)

    6 Hill (3)
    2 Law
    3 Lawless (1)
    3 Levy (but no Tax)

The Name Number, calculated on the above list, is 1.26%, compared to geology's 1.35%. However, we also find the following names of U.S. presidents:

    1 Washington
    3 Adams (2)
    3 Monroe
    4 Jackson (3)
    1 Harrison
    No Tyler, but a Tyler Johnson, who should probably count double
    2 Pierce
    1 A. Johnson, no L. Johnson
    2 Grant (1)
    2 Hayes (1)
    8 Wilson
    1 Harding
    1 Kennedy
    4 Nixon (1)
    1 Carter
    2 Clinton (1)

These names alone constitute 0.82%. Adding them to the above yields a new Name Number of 2.08%. Finally, one finds—with only casual inspection—the following names of present and former non-U.S. heads of state:

    Callaghan
    Heath
    Gandhi

Brandt
Lee
Park
Kim
Mao
McDonald
Clark
Campbell
Martin

Were one to expand these lists to include other well-known politicians, political science, I argue, would almost certainly lead all other disciplines in the name game.

Discussion

Further study could look into the sub-specialties of the above-mentioned authors. Do Professors Washington, Adams, and so on study the presidency? Or at least American politics? Are Gandhi and Mao Indian and Chinese specialists, respectively? Do Wiseman, Goodman, Fair and Bliss study political philosophy? Do Power, Powers, and Guerra write about International Relations? From there, one could move on to consider whether persons take on any of the characteristics of the leaders (or kinds of leaders) whose names they bear. Are Law and Lawless opposites? Is Fair fair? And what should we expect from the Nixons? And, of course, one could see whether names and particular kinds of colleges and universities are linked. Are the Popes at Catholic institutions? Does Canon's school have an ROTC program? These and many other fascinating questions await more detailed analyses.

Note

Ironically, the author's name, Niemi (when not misspelled), is a Finnish word with a geological meaning. It refers to a "point" of land, as in Sandy Point.

Reference

1. "The 'Name Number' for Geology, and for Other Professions," Kevin Krajik, *Annals of Improbable Research*, vol. 11, no. 2, March/April 2005, pp. 14-5.

Slugs, Snails and Coffee

by Grover Quist, The Hermitage Institute, Washington, D.C.

Three Hawaiian researchers demonstrated that coffee is a good way to repel slugs and snails. Inspired by their achievement, I have done the reverse experiment. I have shown that slugs and snails are a good way to repel coffee drinkers.

The "coffee repels slugs and snails" report, published in 2002, explains that: "solutions of caffeine are effective in killing or repelling slugs and snails when applied to foliage or the growing medium of plants."

I obtained slugs and snails, and put them on the counters of a several coffee shops in my neighborhood. More than forty people came into these shops while I was conducting my experiment. Everyone noticed the slugs and snails. Everyone left without purchasing coffee.

Reference

"Pest Control: Caffeine as a Repellent for Slugs and Snails," Robert G. Hollingsworth, John W. Armstrong and Earl Campbell, *Nature*, vol. 417, June 27, 2002, pp. 915-6.