

Fully 60% of the published articles in this sample are never cited. This pattern is widely recognized and typical of most scholarly literatures. Figure 1 includes self-citations by authors of their own work, which might lead one to expect a somewhat less skewed distribution. The database reveals a total of 98,095 citations of the 20,736 articles, which calculates out to the somewhat misleading statistic of an average number of citations per article of 4.73. A better measure, perhaps, given this distribution is the median or the mode, both of which are 0 as one can see from a visual inspection of the figure.

Given this pattern of concentration, one comes to appreciate the structural significance of the top 200 most cited articles—these 200, a mere 1% of all articles in the sample, attract 38% of all citations. Among the most frequently cited articles are McCombs and Shaw (1972), “Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media” (560 citations); Krugman (1965), “The Impact of Television Advertising: Learning Without Involvement” (384 citations); Entman (1993), “Framing: Toward a Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm” (281 citations); Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli’s (1980), “The Mainstreaming of America: Violence Profile No 11” (276 citations); and Katz (1957) “The 2-Step Flow of Communication” (231 citations).<sup>4</sup>