

MEASURING INTERNATIONALISATION OF BOOK PUBLISHING IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES USING THE BARYCENTRE METHOD (RIP)

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Abstract

Using places-of-publication barycentres this paper measures the internationalisation of book publishing in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) as practiced at Flemish universities. Over a ten-year timespan, the barycentre for monographs, edited books and book chapters has moved south-westwards slightly, away from Flanders, Belgium. A comparison of 16 SSH disciplines demonstrates how European continental, British, American and other publishers carry a different weight depending on the discipline.

Introduction

This paper examines aspects of internationalisation of scholarly book publishing by researchers affiliated with Flemish universities in the period 2002-2011. We apply the concept of barycentre to the place of publication of peer reviewed monographs, edited books and book chapters. A barycentre of book publishing is defined as the imaginary point at which a flat, weightless but stiff map of the world would balance if weights of identical value were placed on it so that each weight represented the place of publication of one monograph, edited book or book chapter (Bartlett, 1985; Jin & Rousseau, 2001). Two aspects of internationalisation are analysed in particular. First, it is determined whether the places-of-publication barycentre for book publications in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) has moved during the period under study. Second, the barycentres for 16 SSH disciplines are calculated with a view of visualising differences in internationalisation. The further away a barycentre is from the barycentre of the five Flemish universities, the more frequent authors have published with a publisher that is not situated in Flanders. Often this is an Anglophone, i.e. British or American publisher. The analysis of full coverage data on peer-reviewed publications in the SSH has previously shown that SSH journal articles are increasingly published in English and in the Web of Science

(Ossenblok, Engels, & Sivertsen, 2012), two major indications of internationalisation of scholarly SSH research. Adding to this, the comparison of barycentres presented in this paper offers information on aspects of internationalisation of book publishing, thereby broadening the picture of publication patterns in the SSH (Hicks, 2004). A growing geographical distance of the places-of-publication barycentres to the place of affiliation of the scholar(s) involved (i.e. the Flemish universities), and hence a smaller role for local publishers, would in its own right be indicative of growing internationalisation of scholarly book publishing.

For Flanders, comprehensive data on SSH book publications is available through the Flemish Academic Bibliographic Database for the Social Sciences and Humanities (“Vlaams Academisch Bibliografisch Bestand voor de Sociale en Humane Wetenschappen” or VABB-SHW, www.ecoom.be/en/vabb). This database was established in 2008-2010 in order to include the peer reviewed SSH publications in the regional performance-based research funding system (PRFS) (Engels, Ossenblok, & Spruyt, 2012). In order to achieve comprehensive coverage of academic publications, the Flemish Government entrusted an independent body of academics with the task of selecting the peer reviewed outputs published since 2000 from the whole of the SSH publications submitted by the universities for inclusion in the VABB-SHW. This task proved especially difficult for book publications (Ghesquière, Van Bendegem, Gillis, Willems, & Cornelissen, 2011). After considerable debate, it was decided to include all the book publications by a limited number of 82 publishers that had been identified as the most prestigious and selective for the SSH in a similar exercise in Norway (Sivertsen, 2010; Engels et al., 2012). Three publishers were added in 2011 and another 33 in 2012. In the PRFS this latest selection of 118 publishers is applied to the preceding 10-year window, i.e. the period 2002-2011. In addition, in 2010 the Flemish publishers’ association introduced the Guaranteed Peer Reviewed Content (GPRC) label in order to allow their members to make peer review of individual books explicit and to facilitate inclusion of these books in the VABB-SHW (Verleysen & Engels, 2013).

Data and methodology

The analysis presented in this paper is based on a dataset of 5140 book publications by academic scholars affiliated with a university in Flanders from the period 2002-2011. They belong to 16 SSH disciplines and two general categories. This total comprises 401 monographs, 762 edited books and 3.977 book chapters contained in the VABB-SHW. Of course, since the VABB-SHW collects SSH publications by scholars affiliated with a Flemish university, not all chapters that appeared in the 762 edited books are included. The majority of the book chapters did appear in edited books published by scholars not affiliated with a Flemish university. Hence, although some places of publication are included twice or more because an edited book as well as one or more chapter therein are included in the VABB-SHW, all places of publication are included in the analysis. Places of

publication were used as available in the VABB-SHW database. Whenever the data contained more than one place of publication the first one mentioned was used. Missing places of publication were searched for and added.

For the total of 5140 places of publication, the geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude) were added in decimal notation to their bibliographic description. Barycentres were determined for the 5 consecutive 2-year periods (2002-3: n=724, 2004-5: n=756, 2006-7: n=860, 2008-9: n=1248, and 2010-11: n=1389 [excluding places of publication of GPRC-labelled books for reasons of comparability]) by calculating the weighted average of the relevant coordinates. Weighting was done according to the number of publications for any given place of publication (Jin & Rousseau, 2001; Rousseau, 1989a; Rousseau, 1989b). The resulting barycentre coordinates were located on a Google map using the open software tool Geocommons.com.

One limitation of this approach is that places of publications may be very far apart (Rousseau, personal communication). This may complicate the interpretation of the result. Therefore a second set of barycentres was calculated for the 16 SSH disciplines, restricting the places of publication to European locations only. To this end Europe was defined as the EU (including its acceding or candidate members Croatia, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, the FYR of Macedonia and Turkey) plus Albania, Belarus, Moldavia, Norway and Switzerland. As Table 1 shows, a clear majority of 92% of the places of publications are European.

Table 1. Number of European and non-European places of publication per discipline.

Discipline	# of European locations	# of non-European locations	Total number of locations
Psychology (1)	79	38	117
Communication Studies (2)	92	16	108
Political Science (3)	251	45	296
Social Health Sciences (4)	26	6	32
Educational Studies (5)	161	28	189
Sociology (6)	141	19	160
Economics and Business (7)	325	35	360
Philosophy (8)	441	35	476
Art History (9)	225	17	242
History (10)	318	19	337
Literature (11)	605	34	639
Criminology (12)	104	5	109
Law (13)	436	26	462
Archeology (14)	60	2	62
Theology (15)	441	35	476
Linguistics (16)	660	18	678
All Disciplines	4365	378	4743

Results and discussion

The barycentre for all 5140 book publications from 2002-2011 is located at 50.08826° latitude and -2.69505° longitude. This corresponds to a location in the English Channel, situated some 50km to the South-West of Weymouth in Dorset, United Kingdom. This location, well outside Flanders or Belgium, demonstrates the importance of non-Flemish publishers for book publications by Flemish scholars. As the barycentre is located some 450 km to the West of Flanders, it is especially indicative of the weight of British and American publishers.

Comparing sub-periods

When comparing the barycentres of the five consecutive 2-year periods, it becomes apparent how the geographic centre of weight of scholarly book publishing has moved to the South-West marginally. The various locations again demonstrate the considerable and perhaps growing importance of British and North American publishers, especially in the most recent years.



(source: VABB-SHW; Geocommons.com; Google Maps)

Figure 1. Barycentres for the periods A (2002-3); B (2004-5); C (2006-7); D (2008-9); E (2010-11), taking into account all publication places; and X (barycentre of the 5 Flemish universities' addresses).

Comparing disciplines

Barycentres for the 16 SSH disciplines lie at a varying geographic distance from the barycentre of the 5 Flemish universities (location X, figure 1). The locations of the 16 barycentres stretch out from a point near the Belgian-French border (Linguistics=16; Lat. 50.34762°, Long. 3.32916°) to the middle of the Atlantic Ocean between Brittany and Newfoundland (Psychology=1; Lat. 48.00301°, Long. -27.8229°). This alignment of the 16 barycentres along an East-West axis indicates considerable differences between disciplines regarding the importance of, respectively, Flemish, other continental European, British and American publishers.

Notable in Figure 2 is the discrepancy between the locations of the barycentres of the Social Science disciplines (SS) and those of the Humanities disciplines (H). The barycentres of all Humanities disciplines except Communication Studies are located in or near the Channel, while those of most Social Science disciplines are situated in the Atlantic Ocean to the South-West of Ireland, or, in the case of Psychology, even some 500km further to the West. This illustrates that American

publishers are of greater importance for the Social Sciences than for the Humanities.

When looking at the locations of the barycentres based on the European places of publication only, a marked contrast is noticeable between the Social Sciences and the Humanities as well.



(source: VABB-SHW; Geocommons.com; Google Maps)

Figure 2: Barycentres for 16 SSH disciplines (1=Psychology (SS); 2=Communication Studies (H); 3=Political Science (SS); 4=Social Health Sciences (SS); 5=Educational Studies (SS); 6=Sociology (SS); 7=Economics and Business (SS); 8=Philosophy (H); 9=Art History (H); 10=History (H); 11=Literature (H); 12=Criminology (SS); 13=Law (H); 14=Archeology (H); 15=Theology (H); 16=Linguistics (H)), taking into account all places of publication.



Figure 3. Barycentres for SSH disciplines (Europe) (1=Psychology (SS); 2=Communication Studies (H); 3=Political Science (SS); 4=Social Health Sciences (SS); 5=Educational Studies (SS); 6=Sociology (SS); 7=Economics and Business (SS); 8=Philosophy (H); 9=Art History (H); 10=History (H); 11=Literature (H); 12=Criminology (SS); 13=Law (H); 14=Archeology (H); 15=Theology (H); 16=Linguistics (H)), taking into account European places of publication only.

The Social Sciences' barycentres are mostly located in the United Kingdom or in the North Sea between the UK and the Netherlands, illustrating the weight of British publishers. The divergent result for Social Health Sciences (4) needs to be interpreted with caution, as data for this discipline is limited to 32 book publications (see Table 1). For all Humanities' disciplines but Law and Communication Studies, the barycentres are located within Flanders, pointing to the greater weight of Flemish and other continental European publishers.

Conclusion

The places-of-publication barycentre of monographs, edited books and book chapters published by scholars affiliated with Flemish universities in the period 2002-2011 is situated some 450 km to the West of Flanders and seems to be moving westwards slightly. This finding illustrates the importance of British and American publishers for SSH scholarly research at Flemish universities. At the same time, there is a marked difference between the Social Sciences and the Humanities. For the Social Sciences, British and American publishers are more important than for the Humanities. Humanities' researchers rely more on publishers situated in Flanders and elsewhere in continental Europe for the publication of their books and chapters.

The barycentre method thus proves to be very well applicable to book publications. As a first exploration of the method, and more in general of a geographic analysis of book publishing in the SSH, barycentres were located on an actual map of the world. In our presentation at ISSI, geometric representations of barycentres in standardised polygons (Rousseau, 2008) will be added in order to provide additional quantitative insight regarding the evolving role of continental European, British, American and other publishers over time. We conclude that the inclusion of book publications in the study of SSH publication patterns remains indispensable and that the barycentre method provides a useful addition for measuring aspects of research internationalisation.

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