What's Special about Book Editors? A Bibliometric Comparison of Book Editors and other Flemish Researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities

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Abstract
This paper examines the bibliometric characteristics of book editors and non-editors, focussing on gender, career stage, number of publications and collaboration practices. The data consist of 8970 Flemish affiliated researchers with at least one publication between 2000 and 2011 in the comprehensive Flemish academic bibliometric database (VABB-SHW). The analysis shows that most book editors are established male researchers while most non-editors are non-established male researchers. Moreover, males are more likely to be editors than are females. Half of the established editors edit more than 1 book, in contrast to only a small number of non-established editors. Overall, book editors publish more than non-editors, but, when controlling for career stage, book editors publish even more book chapters and monographs than do non-editors. Although editors are highly collaborative while editing a book, no significant differences were found in the number of collaborative articles, monographs, book chapters and proceedings written by editors and non-editors.

Conference Topic
Country-level studies

Introduction
Bibliometric studies have demonstrated the importance of books to many disciplines belonging to the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). There is a growing consensus among researchers and policy-makers that scholarly publication patterns and their underlying research cultures cannot be adequately analyzed without the inclusion of books (Hicks, 2004; Nederhof, 2006; Sivertsen, 2009). So far, this insight has resulted in a limited number of studies on books in the SSH, mostly focused on scholarly monographs. A book publication type that has received far less attention is the edited book. Editing a book often appears to be undervalued for academic careers (Edwards, 2012) but, in Flanders, from 2010 onwards, edited books are included in the funding system (Ossenblok & Engels, 2015) which gives incentives to individual researchers to take on book editorships (Gläser & Laudel, 2007).

We define an edited book here as a collection of chapters written by different authors, gathered and harmonized by one or more editors (Ossenblok & Engels, 2015) and identifiable by the presence of an ISBN. Edited books have been shown to comprise a sizeable share of the publication output of many SSH disciplines, especially in the humanities (Leydesdorff & Felt, 2012; Nederhof, 2006). In Flanders, the Northern Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, about 2% of all peer reviewed publications in the SSH are edited books, with up to 6% in Linguistics, Literature and Theology (Engels, Ossenblok, & Spruyt, 2012). Compared to monographs, edited books have significantly higher citation rates, especially in social science disciplines (Torres-Salinas, Robinson-Garcia, Cabezas-Clavijo, & Jiménez-Contreras, 2013).

This paper presents a bibliometric case study of the characteristics of book editors, for which, to the best of our knowledge, no previous studies exist. We analyse comprehensive

publication data and present four elements of a general profile of these scholars: career stage; gender; number of publications; and collaboration practices. We hypothesise that scholars tend to edit books only when they are established researchers that are at the forefront of scholarly collaboration.

Data and methods

The data set consists of 8970 authors affiliated with one of the five Flemish universities and who have published a minimum of one peer reviewed publication in the period 2000-2011: a journal article, monograph, edited book, book chapter and/or proceedings paper included in the VABB-SHW (for a full account see: Engels et al., 2012). Because of the use of this database for funding in Flanders, this database appears to be close to exhaustive in its coverage of Flemish research. In addition to the data found in the VABB-SHW, we also determined the gender of all authors. For this, two researchers independently divided all unambiguous first names into two groups: male names and female names. The remaining authors were looked up on the internet, resulting in an additional 1462 gender matches.

A comparison was made between two subsets: book editors (researchers who have published a minimum of 1 peer reviewed edited book in the period under study); and all other researchers, called here non-editors although they may be journal editors or may have edited books during other periods of time. Furthermore, we differentiated between established and non-established researchers. Established researchers are defined in this study as having a total of 12 publications or more and at least one publication in a minimum of 6 different years in the period 2000-2011. These heuristics were chosen after inspection of typical properties of authors in the database. Of course, non-established researchers may have many publications within up to five years, may have a prolific consistent set of outputs before or after the period analysed, or may have many outputs of a type not recorded in the database (e.g., book reviews, performances). Nevertheless, the criteria seem to be effective at differentiating between two sets of researchers, the first of which contains researchers that can reasonably be thought of as being established and the second of which probably contains a much lower proportion of established researchers. Cramer's V was used to measure the strength of the correlation between the different subsets, resulting in a number between 0 (no association) and 1 (maximum association). In addition the Mann-Whitney U test, a rank-based nonparametric test, was used to determine whether there were differences between the subsets on the different characteristics under study, using $p=0.05$ as the threshold for statistical significance.

Results

Career stage and gender

Figure 1 shows the proportion and number of established and non-established, male and female editors and non-editors in our study. In total, 676 (7.5%) researchers had published one or more edited books (i.e., editors), and 8970 (92.5%) researchers had not published an edited book (i.e., non-editors). Figure 1 demonstrates that 55.9% (n=378) of editors are established researchers whereas 13.3% (n=1102) of non-editors are established researchers. Furthermore, 74.3% (n=502) of editors are male whereas to 58.9% (n=4883) of non-editors are male. In addition, 9.3% of all male researchers are editors and 4.9% of all female researchers are editors. Furthermore, 25.5% of all established researchers are editors, whereas only 4% of all non-established researchers are editors. Altogether, 43.5% (n=294) are male established editors, 30.8% (n=208) are male non-established editors, 13.3% (n=90) are female non-established editors and 12.4% (n=84) are female established editors. Different proportions occur in the subgroup of the non-editors where 49.1% (n=4070) are male non-

established researchers, 37.6% (n=3122) are female non-established researchers, 9.8% (n=813) are male established researchers and 3.5% (n=289) are female established researchers.

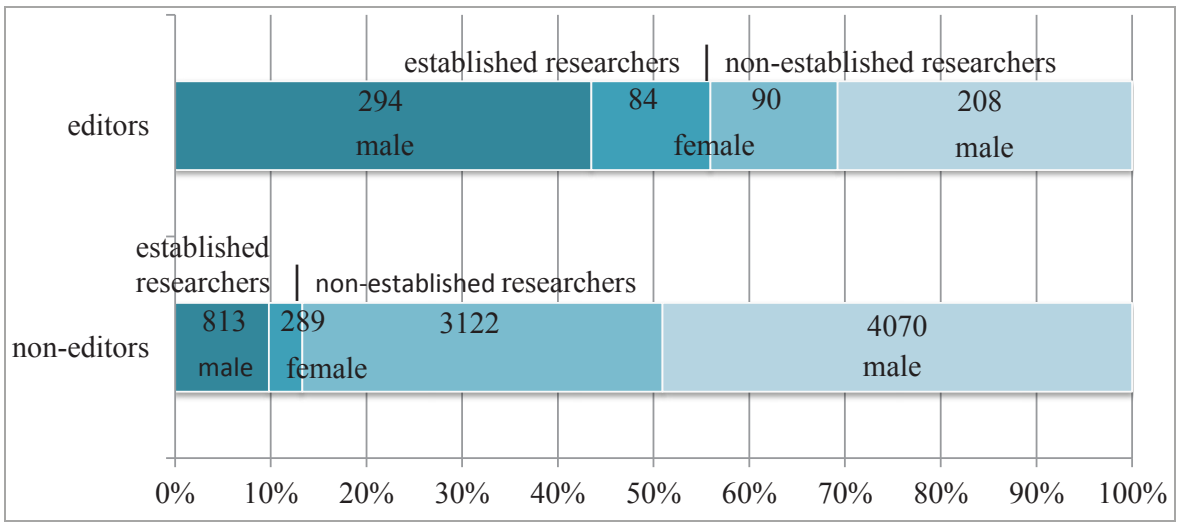

Figure 1: Share and number of established and non-established, male and female editors and non-editors (2000-2011).

There is a moderate association (Cramer's V=0.134; p=.000) between gender and career status overall (see also Figure 1). However, when looking at the different subsets, the correlation between gender and career status is stronger within the subset of non-editors (Cramer's V=0.119; p=.000) than within the subset of editors (Cramer's V=0.091; p=.000). Overall, though, career status has a stronger association with editorship than with gender (resp. Cramer's V=0.304; p=.000 and Cramer's V=0.083; p=.000). Therefore in the rest of this study we will focus on differences in career status rather than gender.

Number of publications

Table 1 shows the mean and median number of edited books, articles, book chapters, monographs and proceedings for all editors and non-editors. In addition, the table displays the difference between non-established and established researchers. Overall, editors publish on average a greater number of all publication types than do non-editors. However, established non-editors publish on average more articles than do established editors. Mann-Whitney U tests were run to test for differences in numbers of publications between editors and non-editors for all publication types except edited books. The distributions of all the publication types for editors and non-editors and for established and non-established researchers were visually similar. The differences between editors and non-editors are statistically significant for all publication types (all p=.000). When comparing established editors and established non-editors, all differences are significantly different (p=.000) except for the numbers of proceedings (p=.138). When comparing non-established editors with non-established non-editors, the differences for articles (p=.119) and proceedings (p=.911) were not significantly different, whereas the differences for book chapters and monographs were (both p=.000).

Furthermore, Table 1 shows that the median of numbers of edited books differ between established and non-established editors. Non-established editors are more likely to have (co−)edited one book whereas established editors are more likely to have more than 1 edited book. More specifically, 83.2% of all non-established editors have one edited book, whereas 48.4% of all established editors have one edited book, 24.3% have two edited books and 27.2% have three or more edited books.

Table 1: The mean and median (med) number of edited books, articles, book chapters, monographs and proceedings for all established and non-established editors and non-editors (2000-2011).

		edited books		*articles*		*book chapters*		*monographs*		*proceedings*	
		mean	*med*	*mean*	*med*	*mean*	*med*	*mean*	*med*	*mean*	*med*
Editor	established researcher	2.17	2	20.62	14	7.92	6	0.59	0	0.97	0
	non-established researcher	1.22	1	2.93	2	2.31	2	0.16	0	0.17	0
	total	1.76	1	12.82	7	5.44	4	0.40	0	0.62	0
non-editor	established researcher	-	-	26.00	18	1.57	1	0.22	0	0.82	0
	non-established researcher	-	-	3.00	2	0.29	0	0.03	0	0.16	0
	total	-	-	6.06	2	0.46	0	0.05	0	0.24	0

Collaboration practices

For both editors and non-editors, Figure 2 shows the proportion of their edited books, articles, book chapters, monographs and proceedings that have been published in collaboration (i.e., multiple authored versus single authored publications). Editors collaborate the most while editing a book (90.3%; n=1827), which is in agreement with previous research demonstrating that most edited books are co-edited (Ossenblok & Engels, 2015). Furthermore, established editors collaborate more than non-established editors for all publication types under study (p=.000). Altogether, though, non-editors seem to collaborate more for articles, book chapters, monographs and proceedings than do editors. Mann-Whitney U tests were run to determine if editors and non-editors differ significantly in their numbers of collaborative publications. The different distributions of all the publication types, except edited books, were visually similar. The numbers of collaborative publications of editors and non-editors were statistically significantly different for book chapters and monographs (both p=.000) but not for articles (p=.282) and proceedings (p=.116). Thus, non-editors collaborate significantly more in book chapters and in monographs than do editors. In addition, when comparing non-established editors with non-established non-editors, no significant difference in the number of collaborative publications was found for all publication types separately (but p=.000 for articles, monographs and book chapters; p=.005 for proceedings). However, when distinguishing between established editors and non-editors, the differences are significant for all publication types separately (p=.000) except for proceedings (p=.208). In sum, established non-editors collaborate more than do established editors for articles, monographs and book chapters.

Discussion and conclusions

Within a comprehensive collection of Flemish affiliated authors' publications for 2000-2011, this paper demonstrates that 7.5% of the authors have edited one or more books, that more than half of the book editors are established researchers, and that 3 in 4 editors are male.

Female researchers are less likely to be established than are male researchers and this difference is more pronounced for non-editor than for editors. As career status in this study is defined through numbers of publications and publication years, these findings confirm previous findings that male researchers are often more productive than are their female colleagues (Larivière et al., 2013; Puuska, 2010).

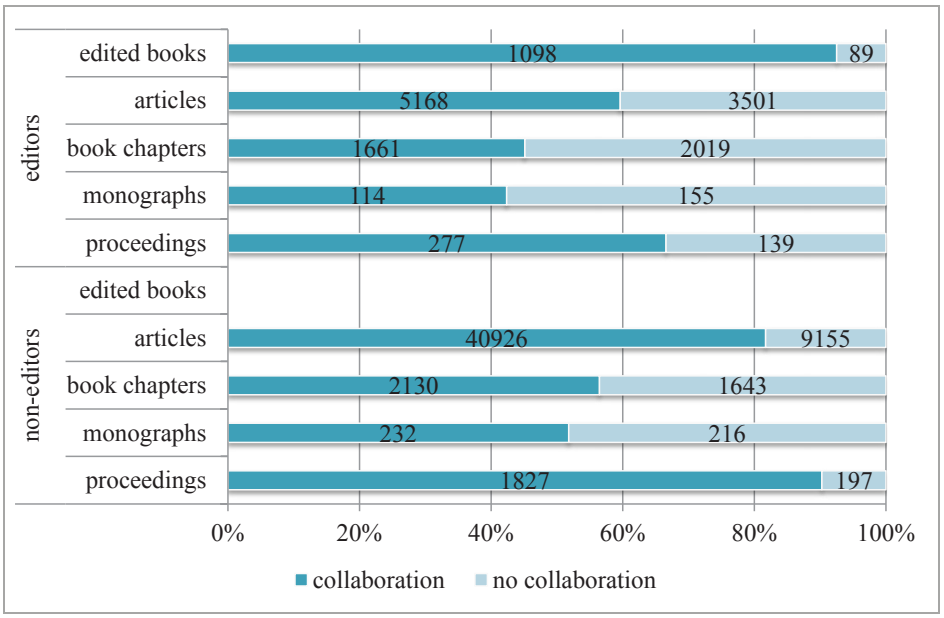

Figure 2: The proportion of collaborative and solo publications for all editors and non-editors by publication type.

Editors tend to publish significantly more articles, book chapters, monographs and proceedings than do non-editors. However, the differences are not statistically significant between the average number of proceedings of established editors and non-editors and between the average number of articles and proceedings of non-established editors and non-editors. Most non-established editors published only 1 edited book in the period under study, whereas more than half of the established editors published 2 or more edited books. This might be due to the need for a large network and good networking skills for gathering contributions from individual chapter authors for an edited book (Edwards, 2012; Thomas & Hrebenar, 1993). We therefore expected editors to be more collaborative than were non-editors for all publication types, but although 9 out of 10 editors collaborated while editing a book, non-editors collaborated significantly more for book chapters and monographs than did editors. Furthermore, no significant difference was found in the number of collaborative articles and proceedings between editors and non-editors. As edited books are more common in humanities disciplines (Engels et al., 2012) and the humanities have been known to collaborate less than the social sciences in articles and book chapters (Ossenblok, Verleysen, & Engels, 2014), the low level of collaboration of editors might be due to them tending to be humanities scholars.

Overall, the findings offer a first insight into some of the bibliometric characteristics of editorship. Future research will focus on disciplinary differences in collaboration practices between book editors and non-editors. A more detailed analysis of collaboration practices will involve not only the number of collaborative publications, but also the number of co-authors. As previous research (Ossenblok & Engels, 2015) has shown, edited books are often published in English, and so the study of the number of international co-authors and co-editors will broaden our knowledge about the international nature of the collaboration network of the editors. In addition, links between book editors and their chapter authors

would provide a more complete picture of the collaboration practices of book editors. This would contribute greatly to our understanding of collaborative practices in the SSH.

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