STATUS HIERARCHIES IN THE GLOBAL LITERARY FIELD

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I EXPLANANDUM

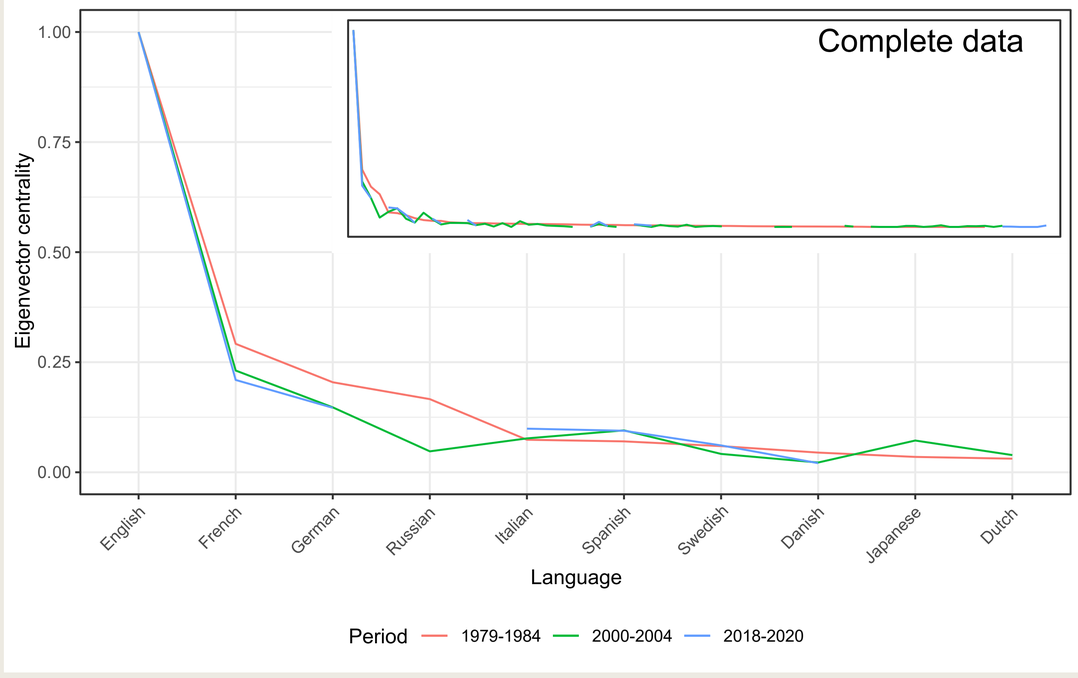


Fig 1: Status inequality across languages

Distribution of Eigenvector-centralities over languages. Large panel zooms-in on top-10 languages with the highest centrality. Gini-coefficients of the centrality distribution are between 0.84 (1979-1984) and 0.86 (2000-2004).

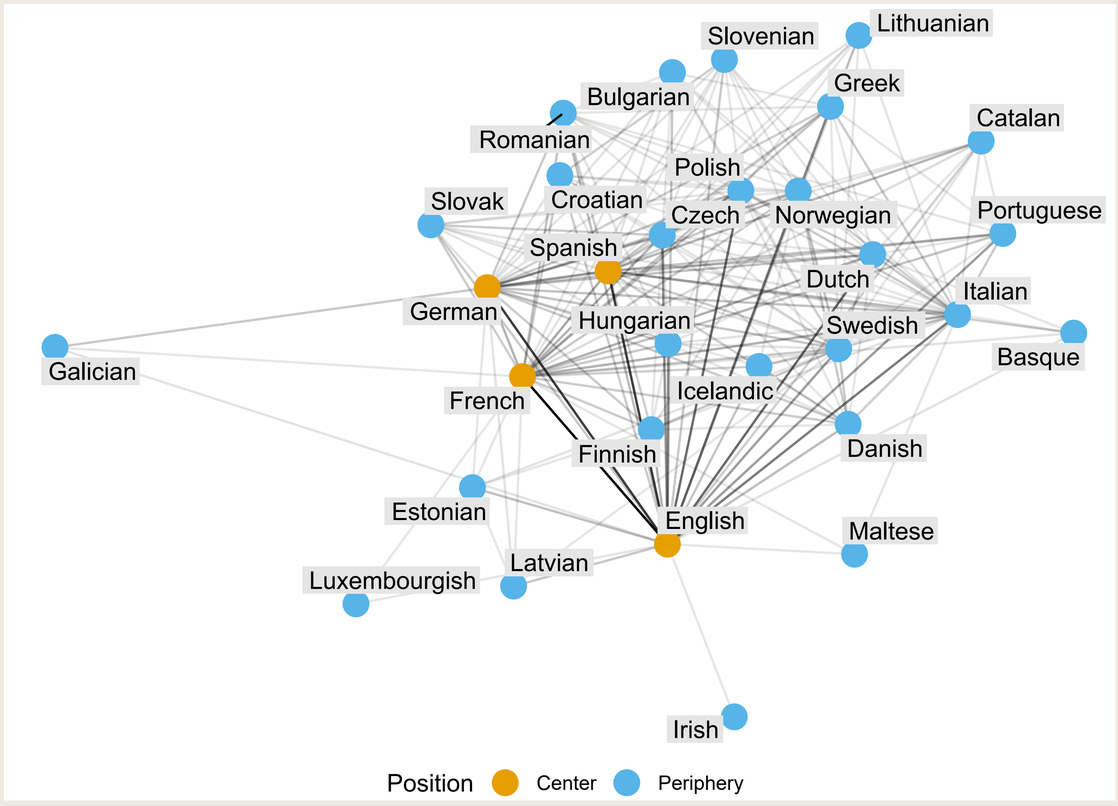


Fig 2: Book translation flows between European languages

Data were collected from the national libraries of N = 32 countries (EU-27, UK, EFTA), 2018-2020. Positions were determined with a direct blockmodel. Languages in the **center** exchange with each other and export to the periphery. Languages in the **periphery** import from the center and tend to not exchange with each other.

II MECHANISM

Micro-to-Macro: Status hierarchies are the aggregated outcome of the choices of mediators (publishers, translators) who decide which books receive a chance for status gain via translation

Status: Position of an agent in a network of deference-relations between status-senders and status-receivers

Status transfer | **Explanation**

Source language	→	Book	Books from languages with high (low) status tend to have high (low) initial status.
Target language	→	Book	Translation is an act of deference. The higher the status of the target field, the higher the book's status gain.
Mediator	→	Book	Mediators transfer part of their status on the books they select for translation.
Book	→	Source language	(Un)Successful translation of its books raises (lowers) the status of a language.
Book	→	Mediator	(Un)Successful translation raises (lowers) the status of the mediator who selected the book.

Fig 3: Acts of status deference involved in translations

Mediator decisions: Mediators consider status payoff (u) and success probability (p) of books

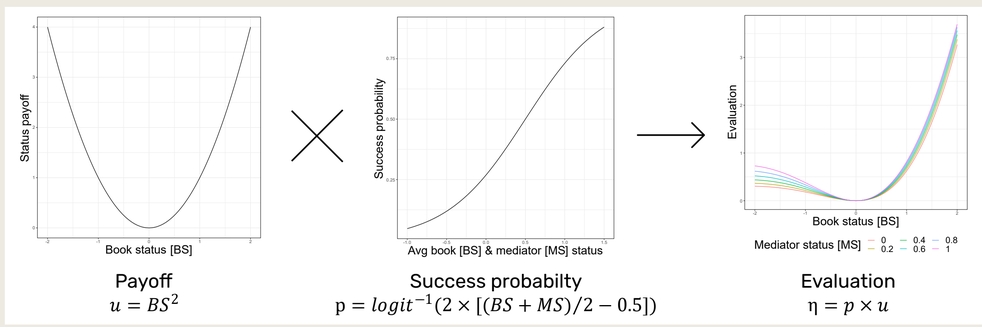


Fig 4: Mediators' evaluation function

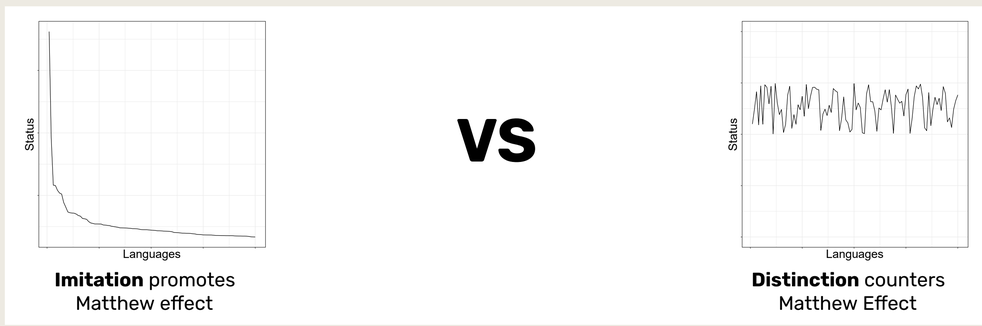
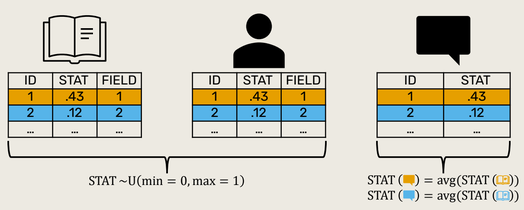


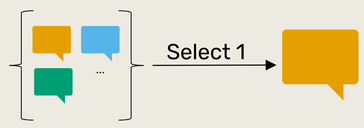
Fig 5: Mediator choices are driven by competing interests in imitation and distinction

III MODEL

Step 1: Create books, mediators, and languages



Step 2: Randomly select once language



Step 3: Mediators in selected language evaluate books

Mediators only select foreign books not yet translated into mediators' language. Each book can be translated at max. once into each language.

Step 4: Update status of books and mediators

Translations are successful with probability p (Fig. 4). Successful translations raise status of mediators by the value of the payoff function u (Fig.4). Successful translations raise status of books by the status of the target field. Unsuccessful translations lower status by the same amount.

$$STAT(\square) = \begin{cases} STAT(\square) + u(\square) & \text{if } p(\square\square) \geq U(0,1) \\ STAT(\square) - u(\square) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

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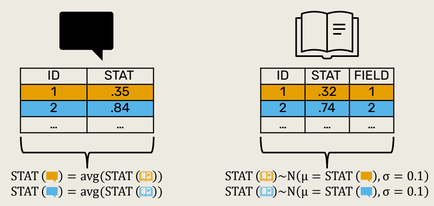
Repeat until each language was chosen twice

Step 5: Update language status and reset books



IV RESULTS

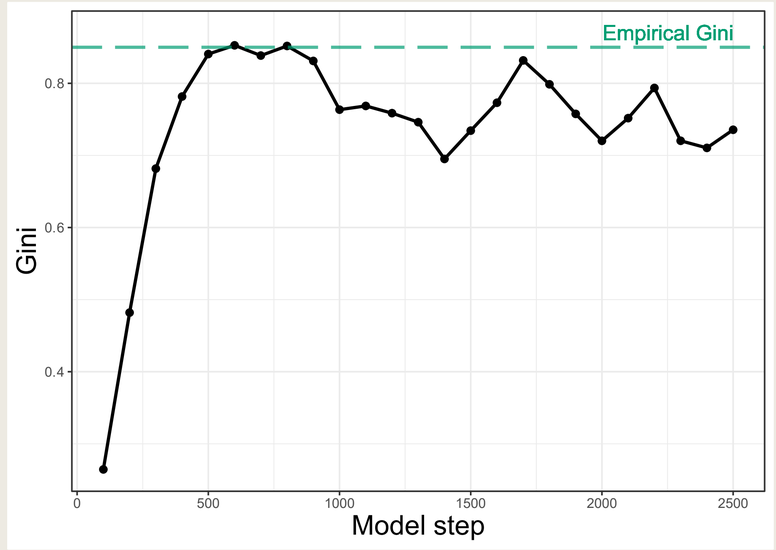


Fig 6: Gini-coefficient of simulated status distribution

Dashed **green line** corresponds to the Gini-coefficient of the empirical Eigenvector-centrality distribution in Fig. 1. Model parameters: 50 languages, 400 mediators, 3000 books, 2500 simulation steps.

CONTACT

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