Libcitations with a public library catalogue and a research-oriented library catalogue: a Flemish case study

Eline Vandewalle*, Raf Guns & Tim Engels

ECOOM, University of Antwerp, Belgium

*eline.Vandewalle@uantwerpen.be

What are libcitations?

- **= library holding counts**

- **Libcitations are a metric based on the presence of books in libraries**

- **Two main papers that introduced the concept:**

  - Torres-Salinas, D., & Moed, H. F. (2009). Library catalog analysis as a tool in studies of social sciences and humanities: An exploratory study of published book titles in economics. *Journal of Informetrics*, *3*(1), 9–26.

  - White, H. D., Boell, S. K., Yu, H., Davis, M., Wilson, C. S., & Cole, F. T. (2009). Libcitations: A measure for comparative assessment of book publications in the humanities and social sciences. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *60*(6), 1083–1096.

librarian + citation = libcitation

A Flemish case study

- **A libcitation analysis based on**
  - Cultuurconnect: a public library catalogue from Flanders
  - UniCat: a research-oriented library catalogue from Belgium
  - VABB: a database that contains all publications by social sciences and humanities scholars affiliated with a Flemish university

- **Focus on**
  - Book publications from the social sciences and humanities
  - Publications in Dutch (the language spoken in Flanders)
  - Publications aimed at a wider audience

University of Antwerp

What I will discuss today

- **Can books written by Flemish Social Sciences and Humanities scholars be found in public and research oriented libraries?**

  - What is the coverage of both types of libraries?

  - Which books end up in those libraries? Peer-reviewed publications? Local-language publications?

- **Which books written by scholars in the Social Sciences and Humanities are found in many public libraries (i.e. are widely available to the public)?**

  - What are the characteristics of the books that are widely available?

  - Can we create a typology of public library bestsellers?

Overview of the data

Total books in VABB*

- **46 641 ISBN'**s in VABB 11
- Used for retrieval
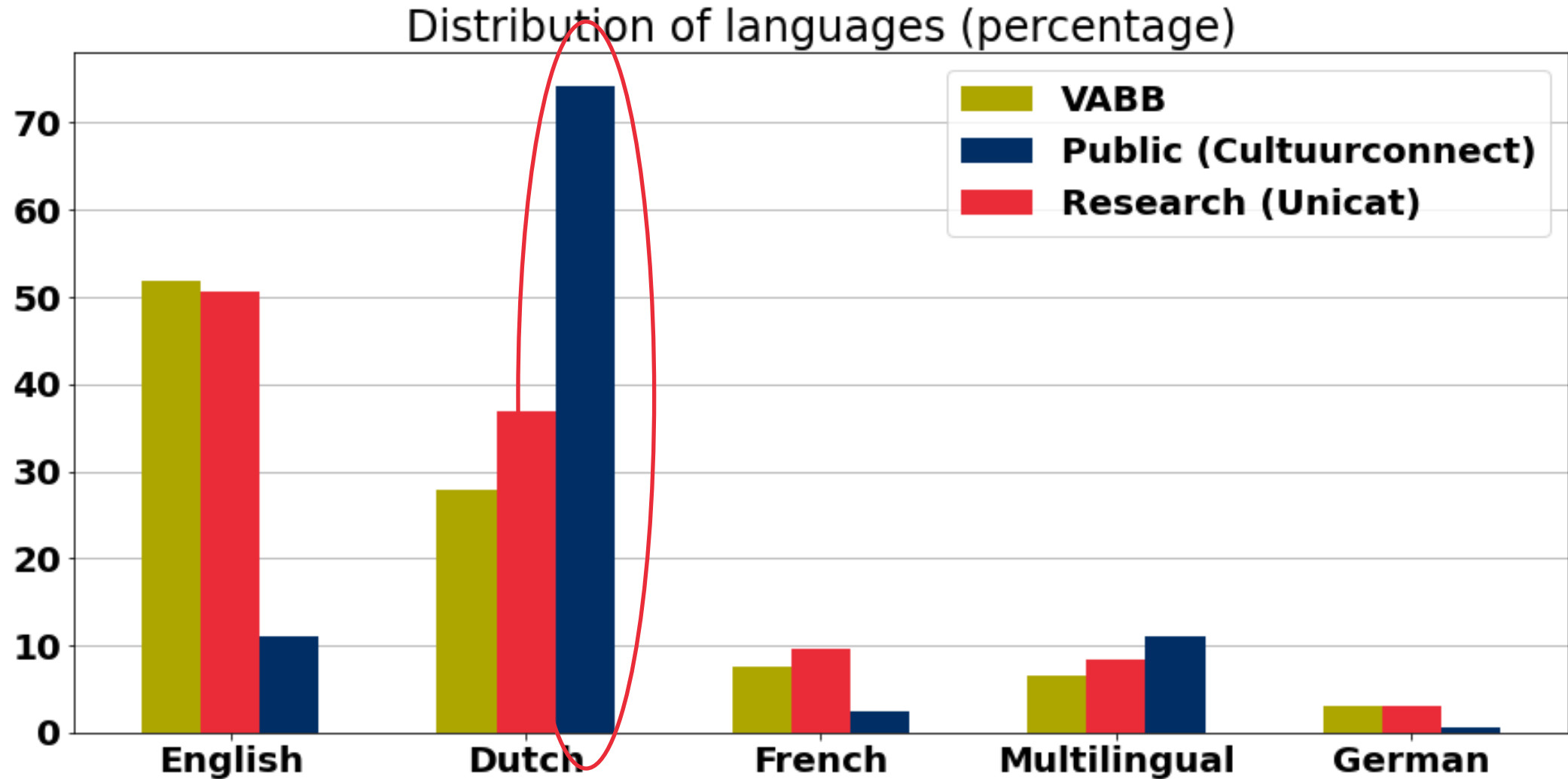- Monographs, chapters, proceedings

Cultuurconnect (public)

- 9302 ISBN's have a FRABL key from Cultuurconnect
- **8 675** of those have a holding count
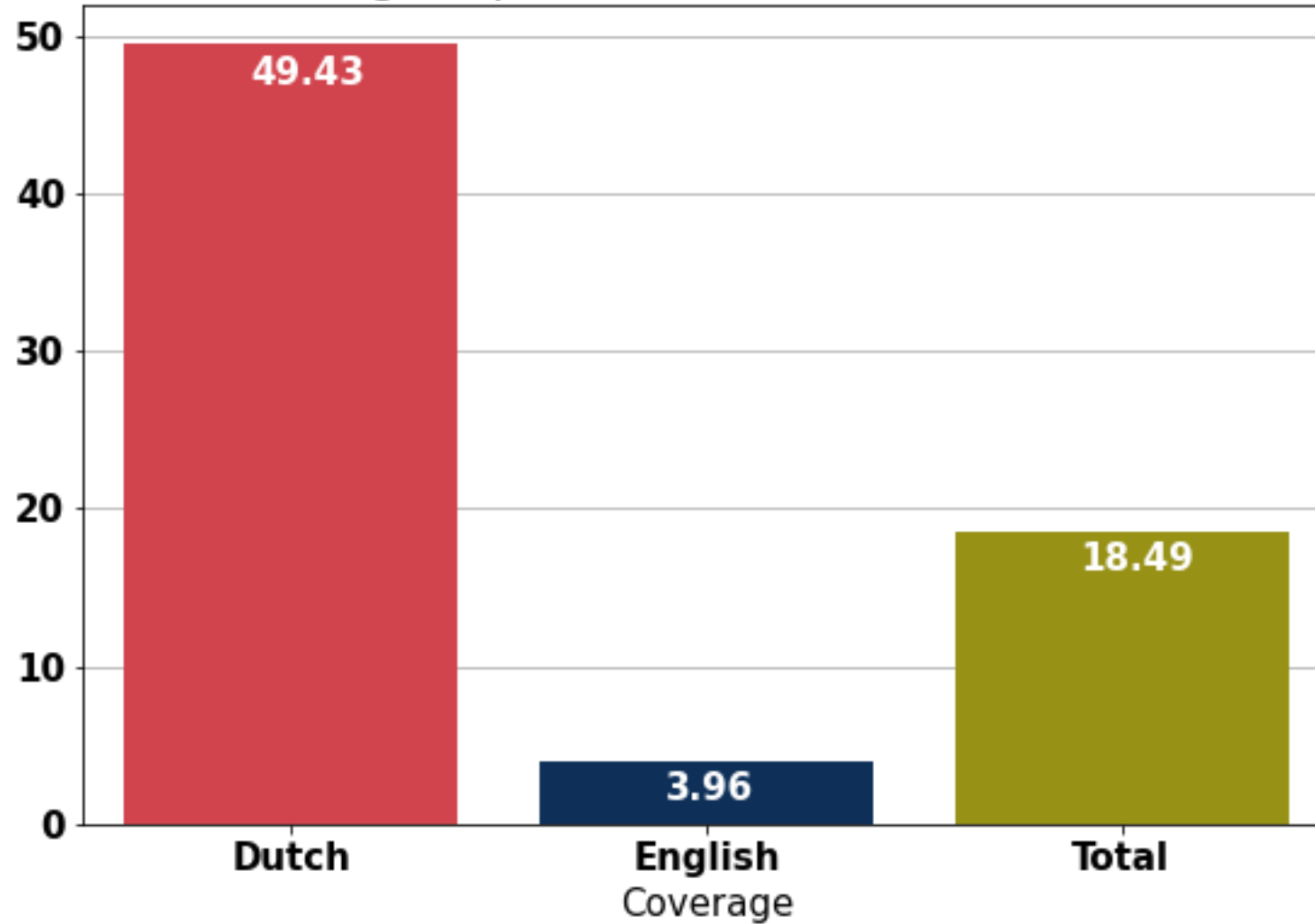- +/- **18%**

UniCat (research)

- **25 528** isbn's are also in UniCat
- **+/- 55%**

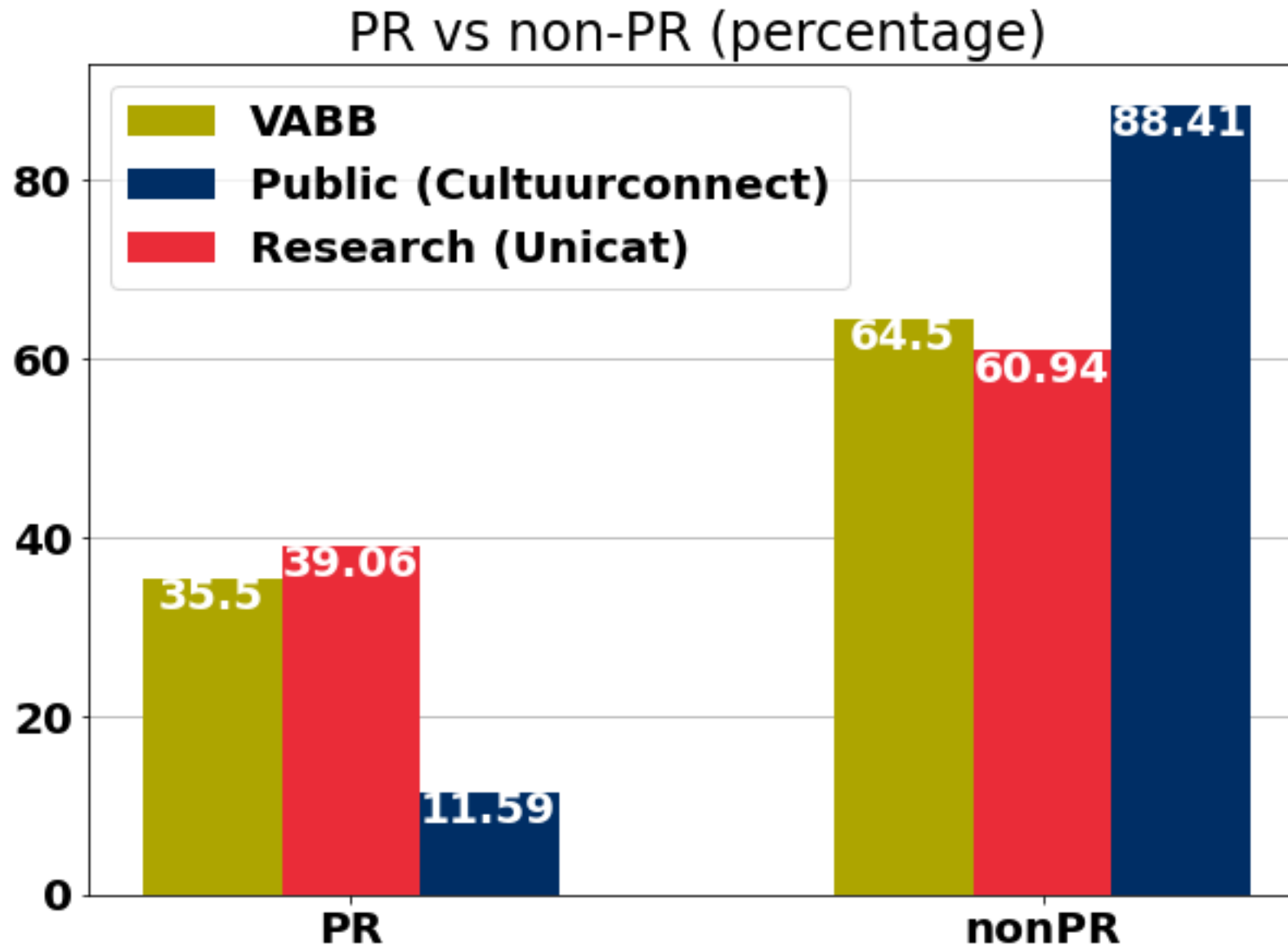***Can be accessed online: https://zenodo.org/record/5795899#.YxCoKdPP3b0**

University of Antwerp

The language distribution

Distribution of languages (percentage)

Legend:
- VABB
- Public (Cultuurconnect)
- Research (Unicat)

Coverage in public libraries (Cultuurconnect)

Peer reviewed books vs. non-peer reviewed books

PR vs non-PR (percentage)

- VABB
- Public (Cultuurconnect)
- Research (Unicat)

PR: VABB 35.5, Research (Unicat) 39.06, Public (Cultuurconnect) 11.59

nonPR: VABB 64.5, Research (Unicat) 60.94, Public (Cultuurconnect) 88.41

University of Antwerp
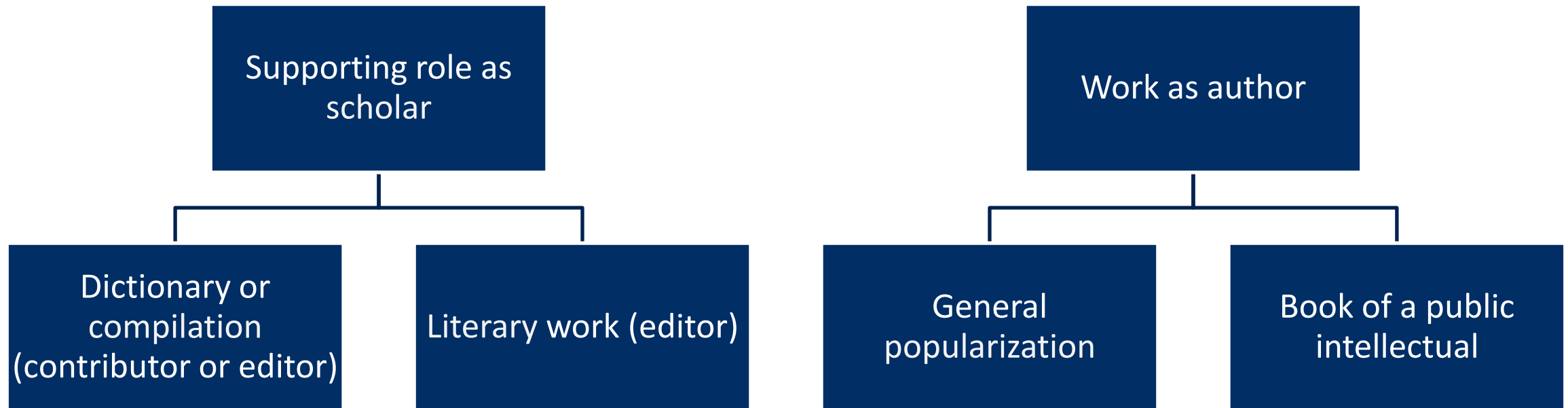
Identifying public library bestsellers

- **Public library bestseller**

  = held in many libraries (top 1 percent of highest scoring books)

  - Examples

    - *De canon. De 50 + 1 mooiste literaire werken uit de Nederlanden - The literary canon. The 50 + 1 most beautiful literary works from the Lower Countries*

      = held in 425 libraries

    - *Borderline Times: Het einde van de normaliteit - Borderline Times: The end of Normality*

      = held in 361 libraries

A typology of public library bestsellers

Supporting role as scholar

- Dictionary or compilation (contributor or editor)
- Literary work (editor)

Work as author

- General popularization
- Book of a public intellectual

University of Antwerp

Popularizing activity?

- *"Frequent participation in the public debate is reserved for high-status researchers only."*

    Jonker, H., Vanlee, F., & Ysebaert, W. (2022). Societal impact of university research in the written press: media attention in the context of SIUR and the open science agenda among social scientists in Flanders, Belgium. Scientometrics, 1-18.

- **Why high-status researchers?**

    - They are already well-known and respected,

    - they have the space and time (they have a secure position).

Conclusions

- **Social sciences and humanities (SSH) scholars write books that are available in local public libraries and in local research-oriented libraries**
  - The availability of these books in local public libraries is low (~18%) but higher for Dutch language books (almost 50%) and non-Peer Reviewed literature (~25 %)
  - The availability in research oriented libraries is higher (~ 55 %)
- **Books written by SSH scholars and widely available in public libraries represent varied activities by academics:**
  - Contributions to new editions of important works of literature
  - Contributions to dictionaries and compilations
  - Popularizations of knowledge from their field e.g. history, philosophy, art history, psychology, child psychology…

Contact information:

Eline.Vandewalle@uantwerpen.be

University
of Antwerp