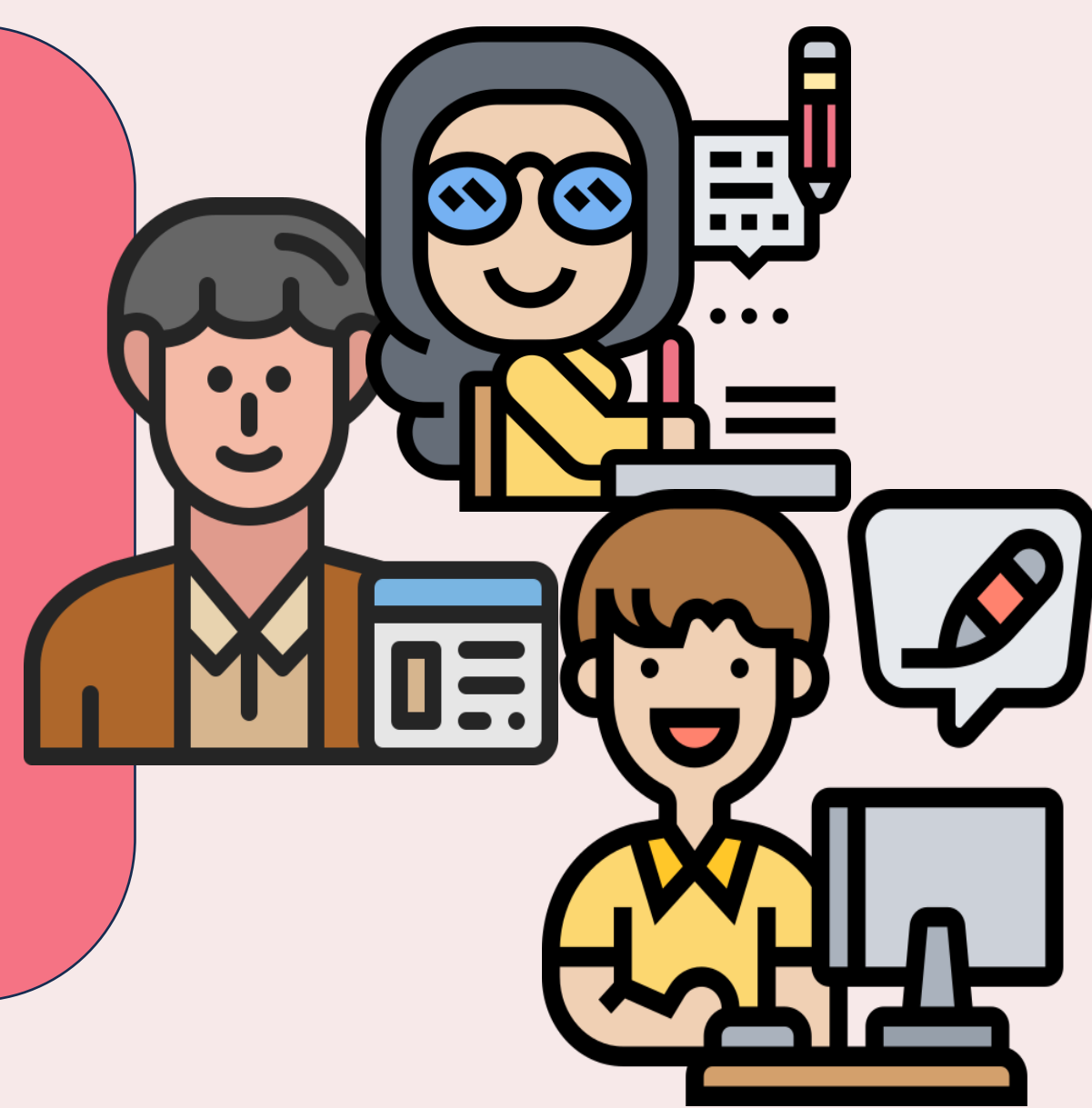


WHO HOLDS THE REINS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES PUBLISHING?



1

Abstract

This study systematically maps the network structure of the editors-in-chief in social sciences journals, focusing on their gender representation, geographical distribution, and institutional composition. Drawing upon large-scale data from 3,320 JCR-ranked journals of 57 different fields in the social sciences (4,868 editors-in-chief from 1,485 affiliations of 71 countries), the study aims to illustrate the current connections of editorial leadership in social sciences. Findings reveal that two countries—the U.S. and the U.K.—and their institutions shape almost all fields of the social sciences, with institutions from other geographies, particularly non-English-speaking countries, being substantially underrepresented. However, there is no central institution that dominates across all fields. In terms of gender representation, male editors-in-chief outnumber females across most fields (66.67%), countries (76.60%), and affiliations (63.16%).

2

Theory & Research Questions

Existing studies often overlook the gender, institutional, and geographical footprint of editorial boards and their potential influence to shape the decision-making process of scientific publishing

By addressing this gap, our investigation seeks to unravel the subtle yet influential ties that weave the network of editorial leadership in social sciences journals

- ✓ RQ1) What are the connections between all fields of social sciences mediated by the affiliation and country of the journals' EiCs? At a more descriptive level, the study also seeks to address the country and affiliation-level contribution to scientific fields, thus posing two follow-up research questions:
 - ✓ 1a) Which are the main countries (of affiliation of EiCs) that are contributing and thus influencing the editorial decisions of each social science field?
 - ✓ 1b) Which are the main institutional affiliations that are contributing and thus influencing the editorial decisions of each social science field?
- ✓ RQ2) What is the geographic and institutional weight of EiCs of scientific journals?
- ✓ RQ3) What is the gender representation of EiCs within a) countries, b) affiliations, and c) scientific fields

3

Methods

Sample

The final dataset included **4,868 editors-in-chief (EiCs)** reported by **3,320 journals** listed in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) of the JCR in the year 2021

Data

For each EiC, we collected the name, institutional affiliation, country of affiliation, and gender as reported on the web page of the journal (2,959 as male (60.78%), 1,843 as female (37.86%), and 66 missing (1.36%))

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Manuel Goyanes, Luis de-Marcos, Timilehin Durotoye, Triwik Kurniasari, Homero Gil de Zúñiga

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Results

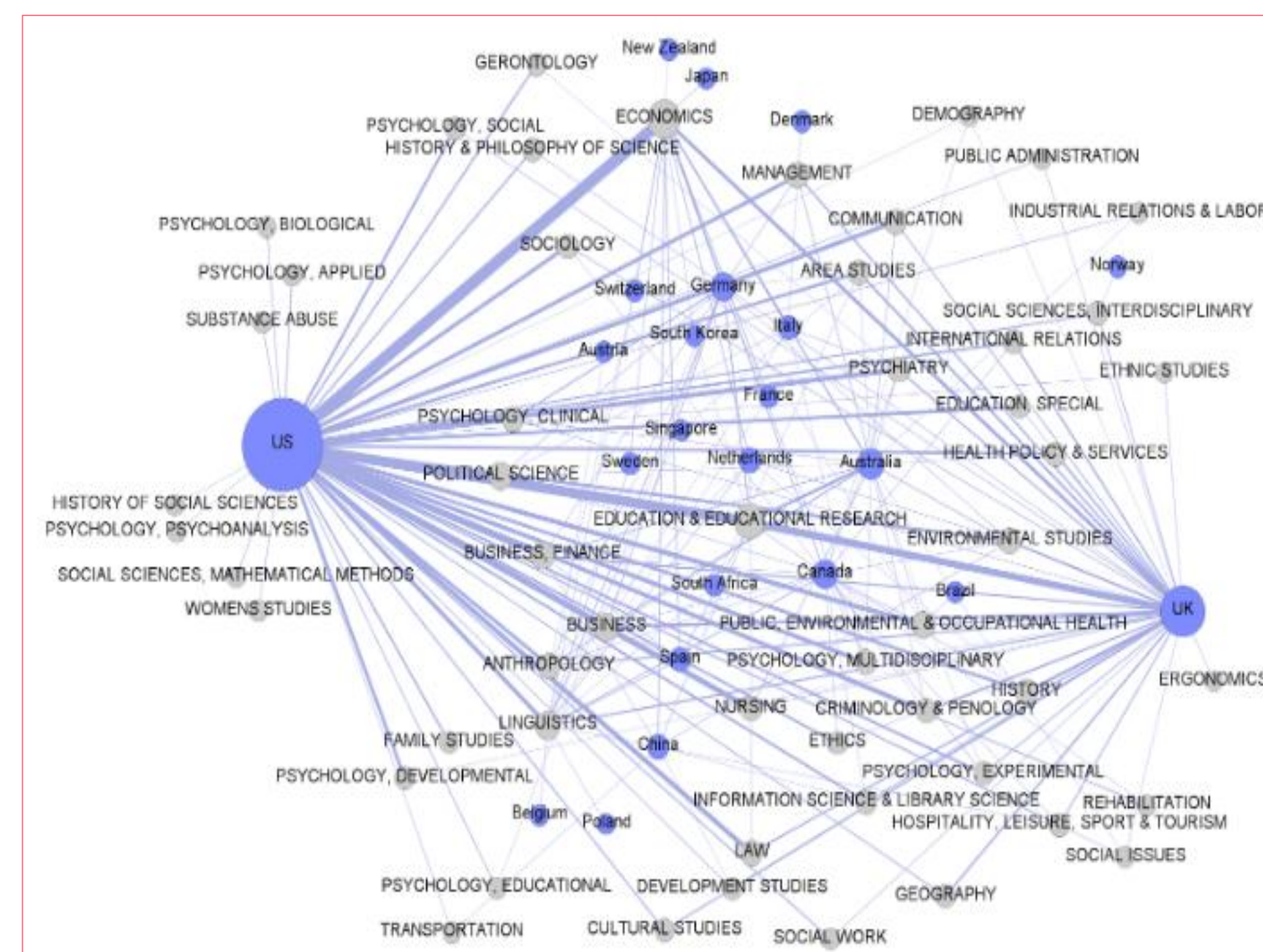


Figure 2. 5-slice of the bipartite graph of fields and countries. Size of nodes is proportional to the number of editors. Thickness of each line is proportional to the number of editors-in-chief between the country and field.

The U.S. & the U.K. are present in all fields (the U.S.) or almost all fields (the U.K.). The rest of the countries are dispersed at the top and bottom, with only a few in the center

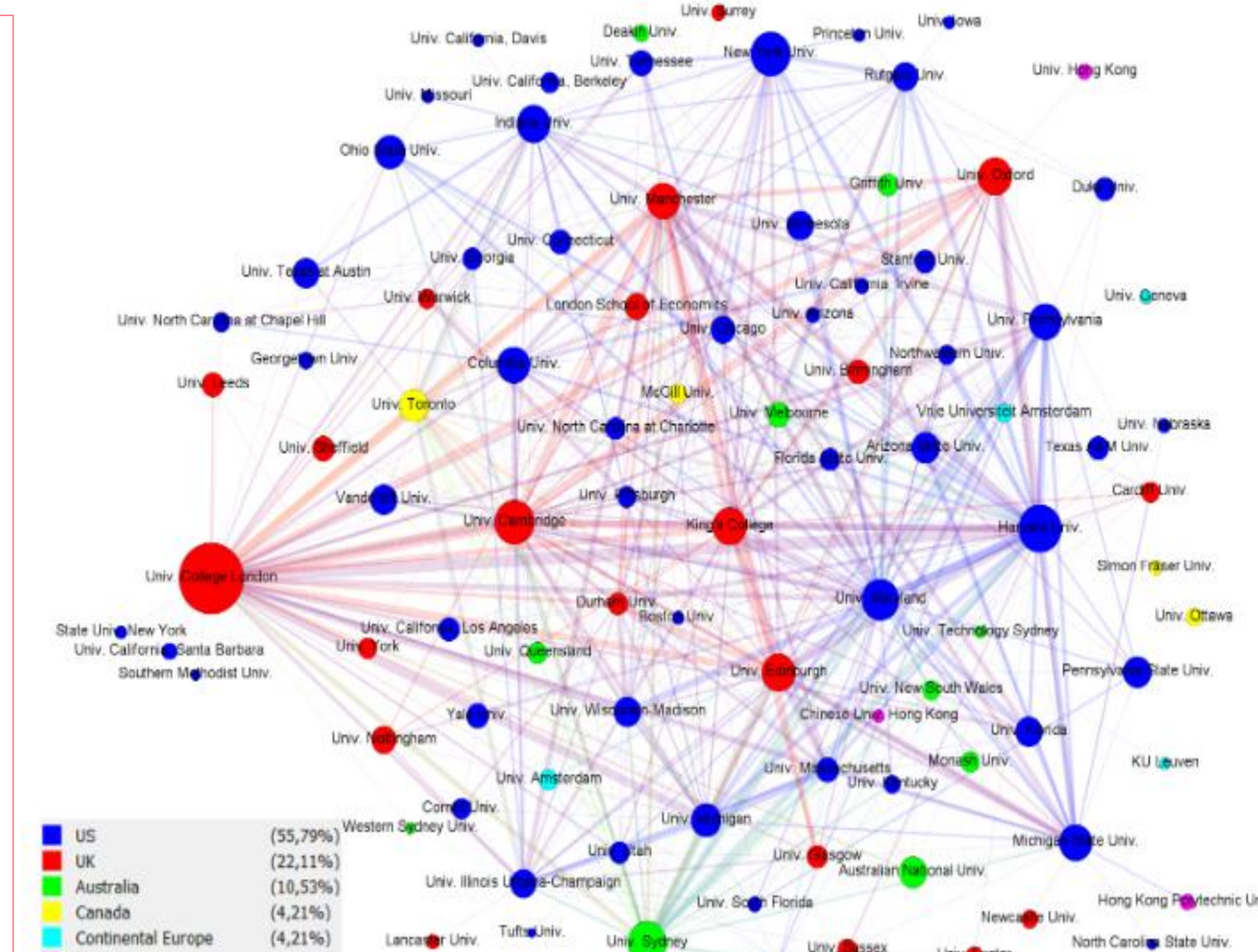


Figure 4. Projection of affiliations by country (Slice). Size of nodes is proportional to the number of editors. Thickness of the lines is proportional to the number of editors-in-chief shared between two affiliations in all fields.

This represents the network of EiCs mediated by field & highlights the central institutions and how EiCs are distributed globally, but primarily across top institutions from the U.S. and the U.K.

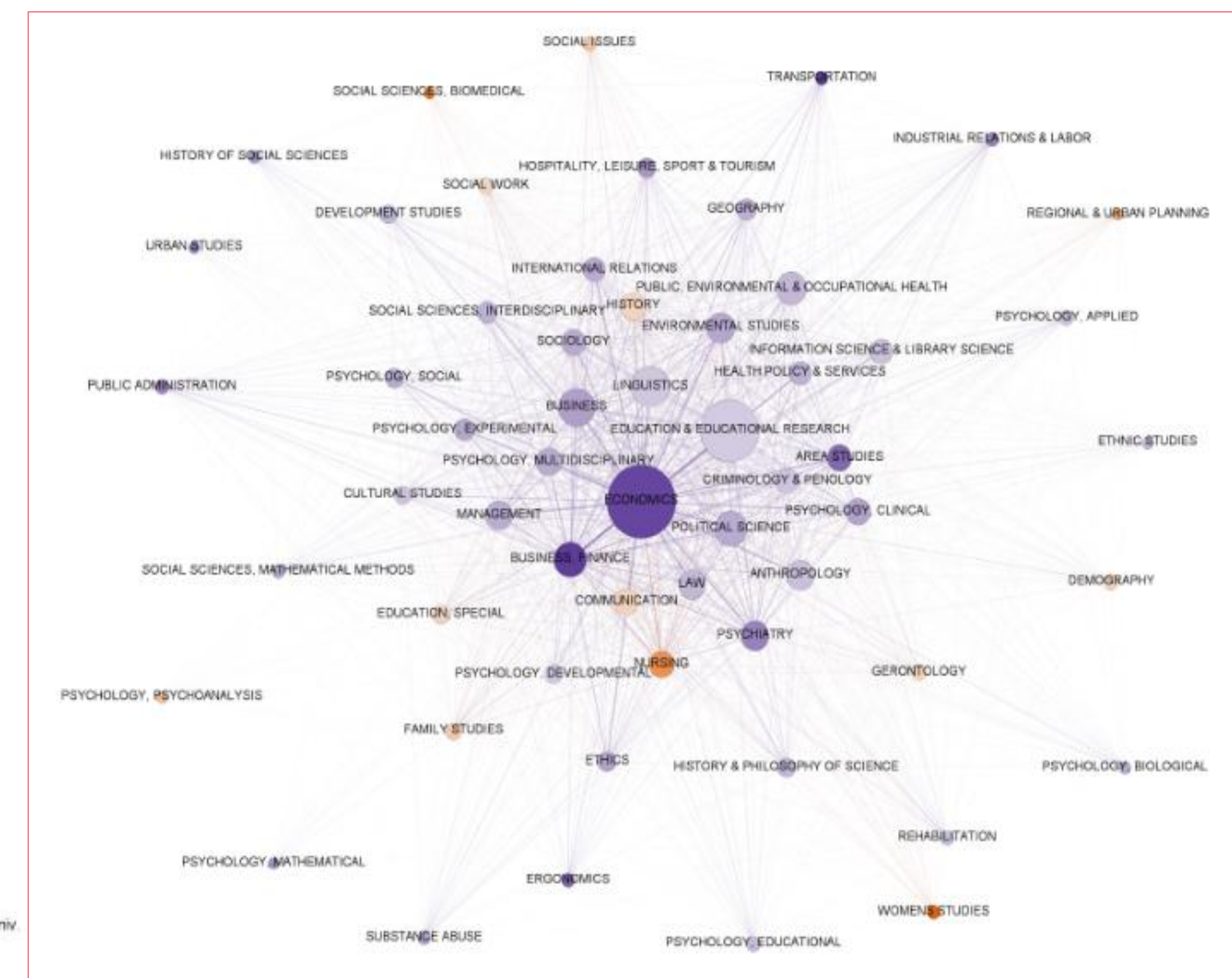


Figure 5. Projection of fields by gender. Colored by prevailing gender (red-female, blue-male). Intensity of color is proportional to the ratio. Darker means more unbalanced. Size of nodes is proportional to the number of editors. Thickness of the lines is proportional to the number of editors-in-chief shared between fields.

Male EiCs outnumber female EiCs in most fields. There are statistically significant differences between fields independent of the mediation (country or field)

5

Discussion & Conclusion

Institutional representation of EiCs

There is a concentration of editorial leadership in social sciences journals among affiliated disciplines in English-speaking institutions, regardless of their scientific merits, and this creates a highly skewed global scholarship

Geographical composition of EiCs

Editorial boards in social sciences journals are prevalent in geographies like the U.S. and the U.K. in selected network metrics, which may influence the decision-making process of scientific publishing in almost all fields

Gender composition of EiCs

There is evidence of uneven distribution of EiCs based on gender, such that the typical journal mainly comprises male EiCs from elite Western universities, and this illustrates a systematic bias that could influence editorial choices

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