

# Context-Dependence and Multivalence in the Language of *The Prince*: Diverging Interpretations of Machiavelli’s Intentions Reflected in Formal Strategies of Translation

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Text as Data, Fall 2014

## EVALUATING TEXTUAL DISTANCE

Translator	Year	Difference Measure	All Words	Substantive Words
1 Adams	1992	Euclidean	5, 7	4, 7
2 Bondanella	2008	Euclidean, TF-IDF	6, 7	6, 3
3 Bull	2003	Cosine Similarity	5, 7	6, 7
4 Constantine	2008	Cosine Similarity, TF-IDF	6, 7	6, 3
5 Gilbert	1989	Gaussian Kernel	5, 7	6, 7
6 Mansfield	1998	Gaussian, TF-IDF	1, 2	6, 3
7 Wootton	1994			

## DIVERGING TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

### Who is Machiavelli?

#### A BUREAUCRAT

“As a consequence of his professional experience, Machiavelli saw politics from the point of view of the technician. His job was to predict wars, preserve alliances, prepare defenses, raise taxes.”

### Who is Machiavelli speaking to?

#### THE MEDICI

“There is no doubt Machiavelli was seeking to gain employment from the Medici”  
“[Much of *The Prince*] is an advice book for a papal brother about how to acquire a state of his own.”

### What is Machiavelli’s purpose?

#### CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL ADVICE

“In *The Prince* he was intelligently pursuing his own interests, as well as trying to interpret theirs to the Medici in terms he had reason to believe they would find acceptable.”

## WOOTTON

### Translation Strategy: Contextualization

### Who is Machiavelli?

#### A PHILOSOPHER

“Is Machiavelli a philosopher? He does not say that he is. And yet he indicates that he is a philosopher...”

### Who is Machiavelli speaking to?

#### PEOPLE GENERALLY, MODERNITY SPECIFICALLY

“The Prince is not a history book...It was written for the future and addressed...to “whoever understands it.”  
“The beneficiaries will be everyone, all humanity – not just his native country or city.”

### What is Machiavelli’s purpose?

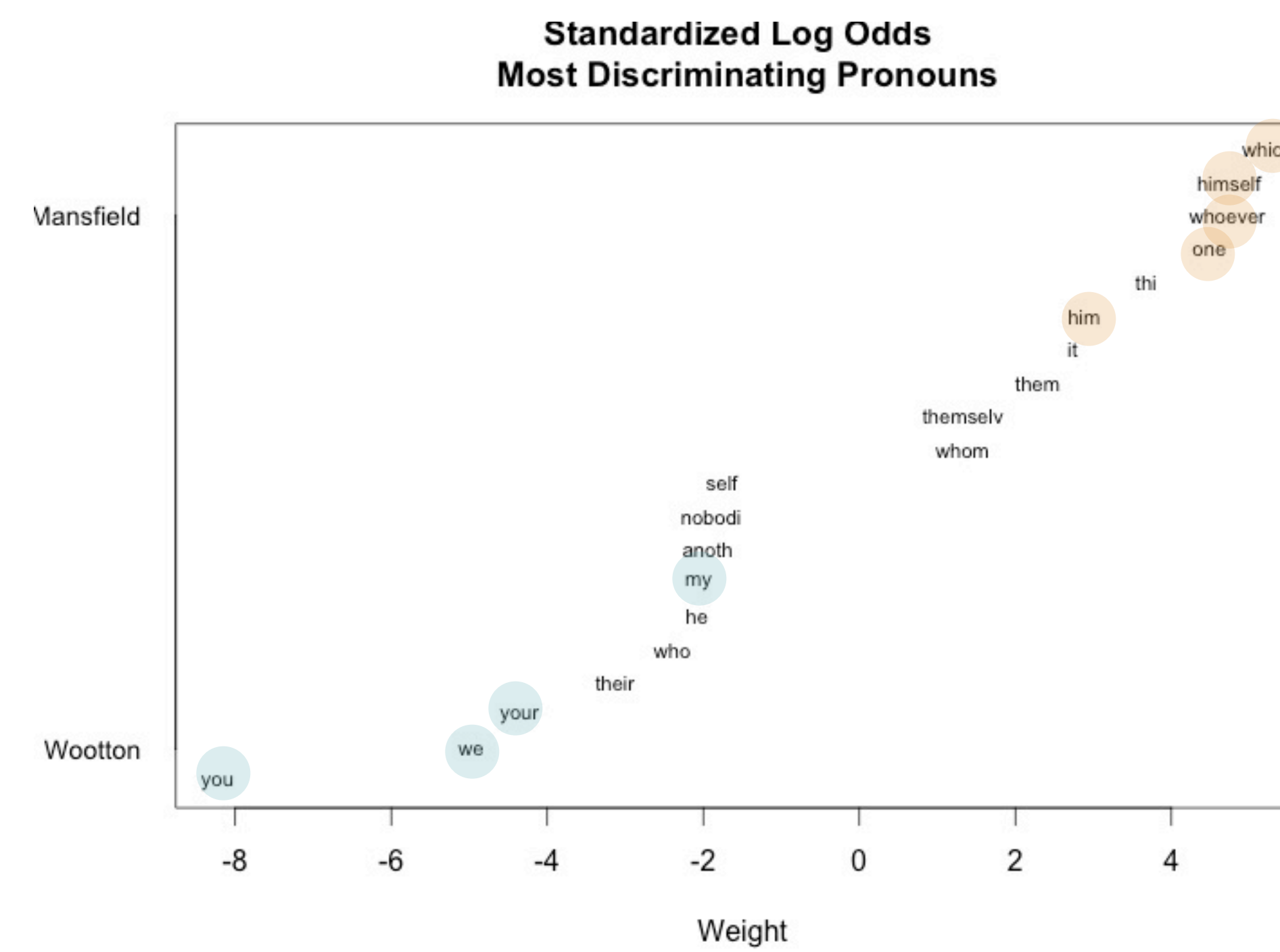
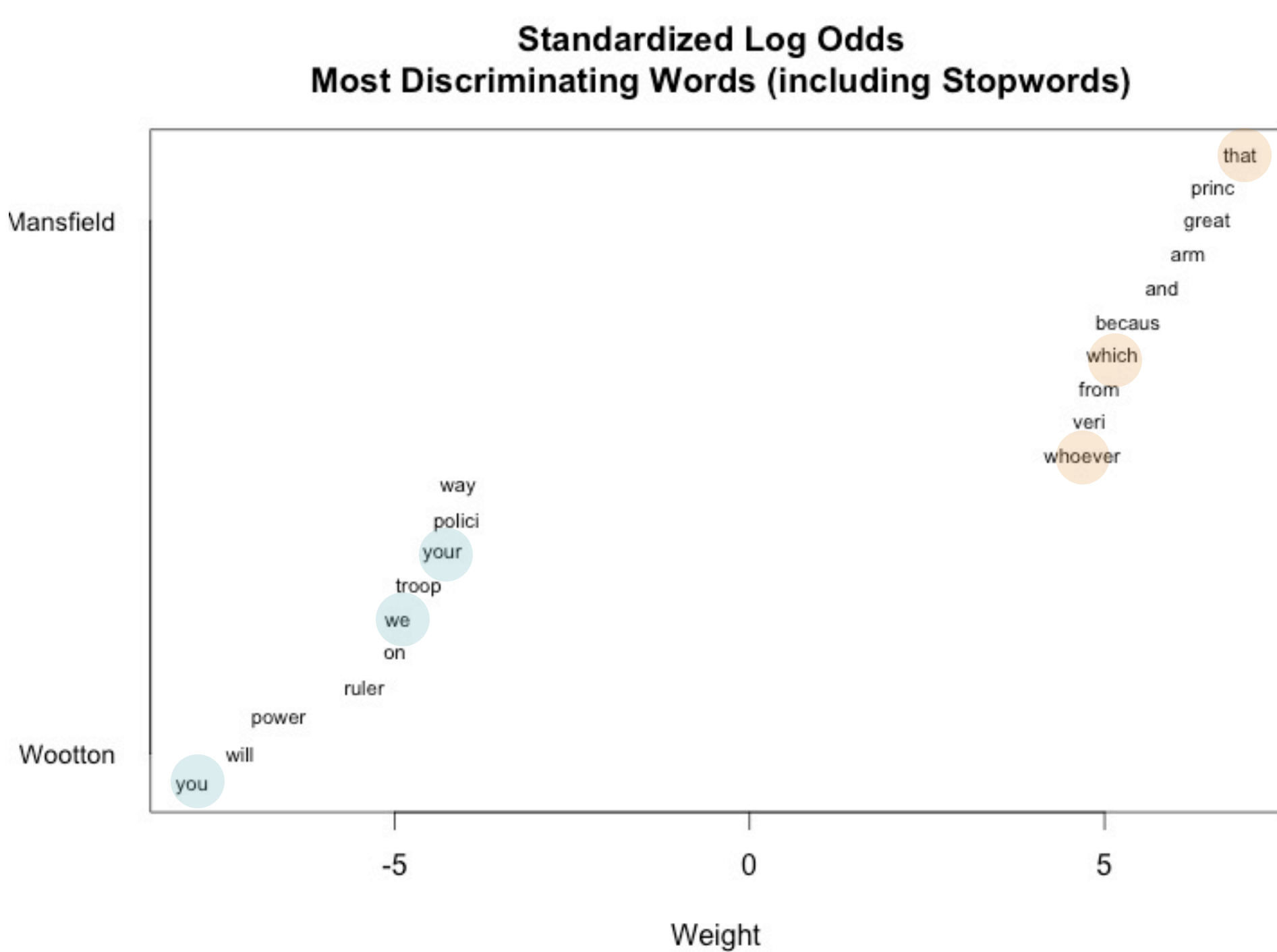
#### BOTH MORAL and POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

“To create the modern world Machiavelli initiated a two-fold transformation of politics and philosophy... politics with the elevation of philosophy and philosophy brought down to earth.”  
“Even among friends and relations...a man must have the outlook of a prince, a wary prince.”  
“The matter at issue is the character of the rules by which we reward human beings with fame or condemn them with infamy, the very status of morality.”

## MANSFIELD

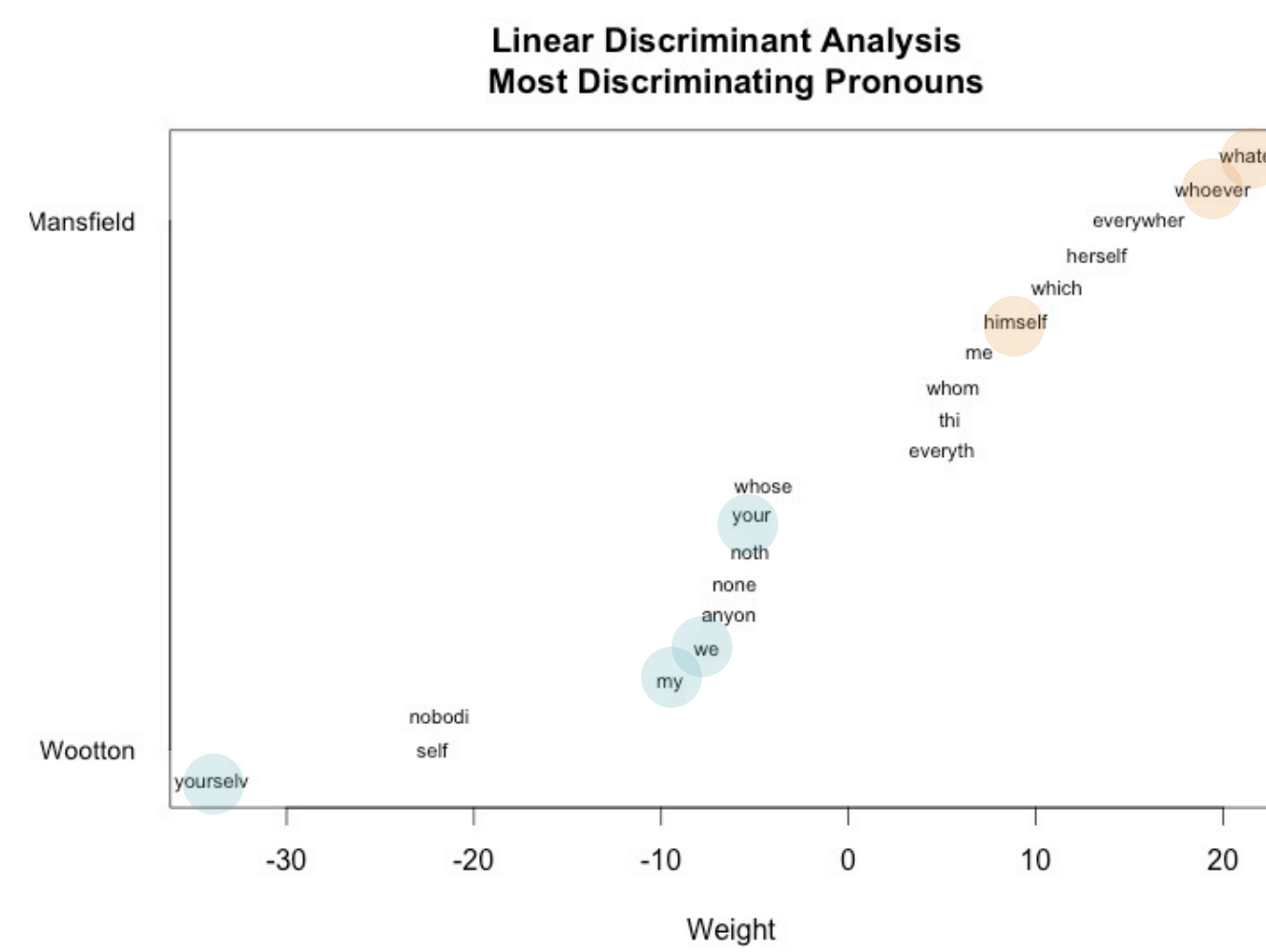
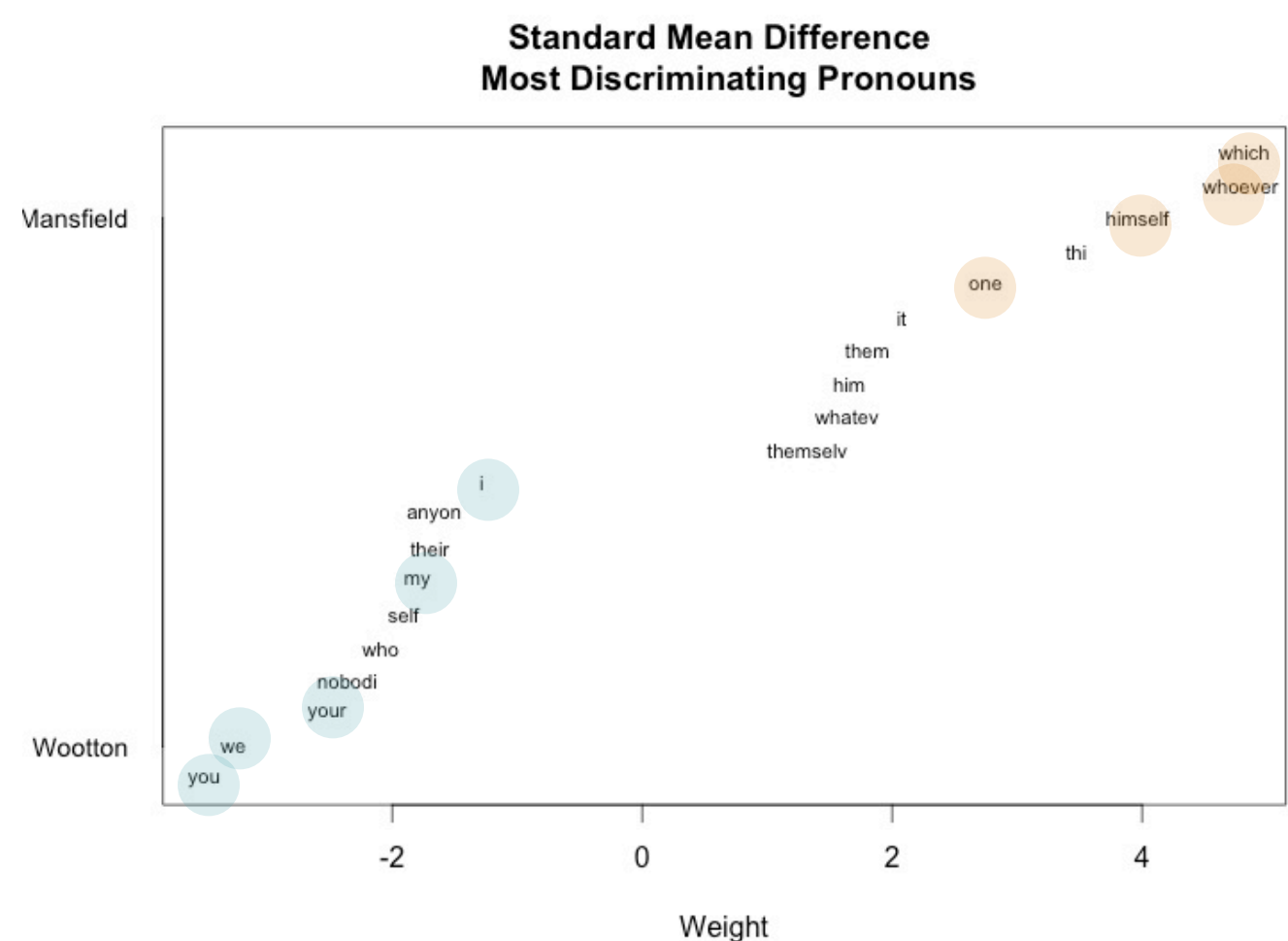
### Translation Strategy: Multivalent Word Use

## PRONOUN USE: MACHIAVELLI AND HIS AUDIENCE



### Pronoun Use

Chapter	Mansfield	Wootton
3	One must always offend those over whom he becomes a new prince.	You always have to give offense to those over whom you acquire power when you become a new ruler
9	When a prince...with his spirit and his orders keeps the generality of people inspired, he will never find himself deceived by them.	If through your own courage and policies you keep up the morale of the populace, then you will never be let down by them.
3	When one recognizes from afar the evils that arise in a state (which is not given but to one who is prudent), they are soon healed.	If you foresee problems while they are far off (which only a prudent man is able to do) they can be easily dealt with.



## CLUSTERING AND WORD COUNTS: MACHIAVELLI’S RHETORIC

Translator	Substantive Word Count	Normed to Wootton
1 Adams	2162	1.03
2 Bondanella	2138	1.02
3 Bull	2181	1.04
4 Constantine	2081	0.99
5 Gilbert	1863	0.89
6 Mansfield	1730	0.83
7 Wootton	2092	1

WOOTTON Cluster 1	38%	MANSFIELD Cluster 1	26%
armi troop soldier citi subject mercenari reput command mercenari fear territori mercenari war	armi citi mercenari troop soldier reput command fear territori mercenari war	peopl great secur fortress kingdom princ hostil turk hostil friendli receiv found	peopl state great secur kingdom difficulti govern virtu support kingdom hold
35%	42%	38%	38%

WOOTTON Cluster 2	13%	MANSFIELD Cluster 2	16%
king pope venetian duke power itali orsini franc orsini itali made church	king pope venetian duke power itali orsini franc church made franc	princ good thing minist held liber thing faith observ merc understand necess men	princ good thing minist liber thing faith observ necess qualiti understand
12%	15%	12%	12%

WOOTTON Cluster 3	11%	MANSFIELD Cluster 3	26%
virtu skill opportun italian cyru fortun god imit men admir	virtu skill opportun italian men great opportun kingdom cyru imit great strength	arm mercenari unarm good auxiliari law militari turn republ swiss	arm mercenari good unarm good auxiliari law militari turn republ swiss
10%	9%	9%	14%

WOOTTON Cluster 4	30%	MANSFIELD Cluster 4	18%
power subject support populac ruler state time peopl hold time fortress	power populac support subject peopl time win hate state soldier secur order	virtu fear hold state put live king action order pope provinc itali acquir mode	fear make honor proporti oblig minist love men princ mode
38%	30%	21%	32%

WOOTTON Cluster 5	7%	MANSFIELD Cluster 5	14%
ruler advis ruler good advis man advic interest men rule judg correct person	ruler good advis man advic thought men act rule interest advic understand	state hold time live provinc power subject recogn difficulti roman make war king church	liber itali order power venetian pope time provinc
4%	2%	19%	4%

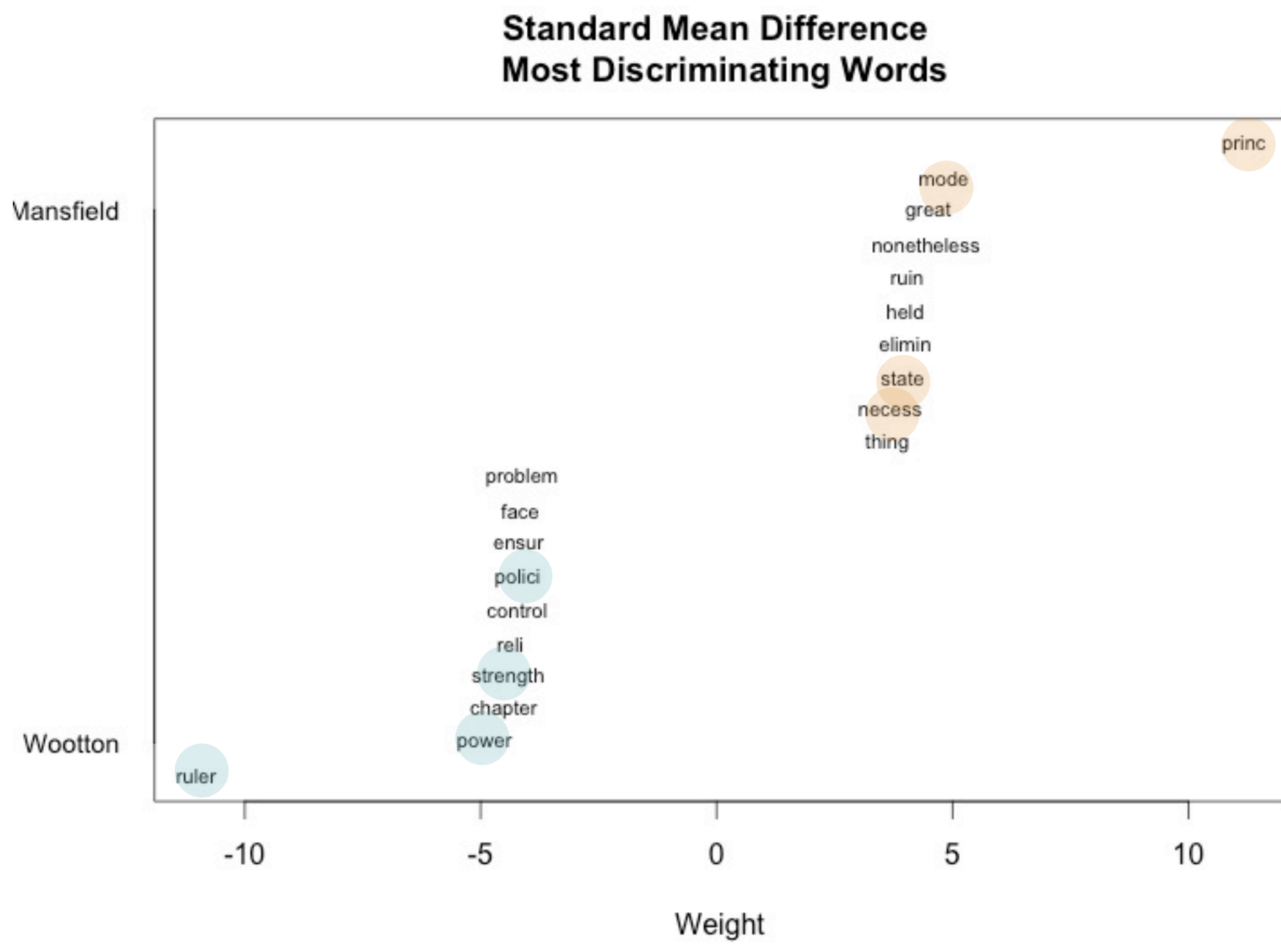
### Virtue

Chapter	Mansfield	Wootton
6	Those...who become princes by the paths of <b>virtue</b> , acquire their principality with difficulty but hold it with ease.	Those who become rulers through <b>strength of purpose</b> ...acquire their kingdoms with much difficulty, but they hold onto them with ease.
8	Whoever might consider the actions and <b>virtue</b> of (Agathocles) will see nothing or little that can be attributed to fortune.	If you consider Agathocles' bold <b>achievements</b> , you will not find much that can be attributed to luck
12	With their own gentry and armed plebs, they performed most <b>virtuously</b> , but when they began to fight on land, they left this virtue behind.	When they armed both the nobility and the populace they had a <b>magnificent fighting force</b> but when they began to fight on the mainland they abandoned this sound policy
7	Unless...those who have suddenly become princes have so much <b>virtue</b> that they know immediately how to prepare to keep what fortune has placed in their laps.	Unless...those who are suddenly made into rulers are of such <b>extraordinary capacity</b> they can work out on the spot how to hold onto the gift fortune has unexpectedly handed them...

### Mode

Chapter	Mansfield	Wootton
9	The prince can gain the people to himself in <b>many modes</b>	There are <b>numerous ways</b> the ruler can win the support of the populace.
15	It remains now to see what the <b>modes and government</b> of a prince should be with subjects and with friends.	Our next task is to consider the <b>policies and principles</b> a ruler ought to follow in dealing with his subjects or with his friends.
22	But as to how a prince can know his minister, here is a <b>mode</b> that never fails.	There is one infallible <b>way</b> for a ruler to <b>judge</b> his adviser.
25	When fortune varies and men remain <b>obstinate in their modes</b> , men are happy while they are in accord, and as they come into discord, unhappy.	Since fortune changes, and men stubbornly continue to <b>behave in the same way</b> , men flourish when their behavior suits the times and fail when they are out of step.

## WITHIN-TEXT WORD USAGE COMPARISONS

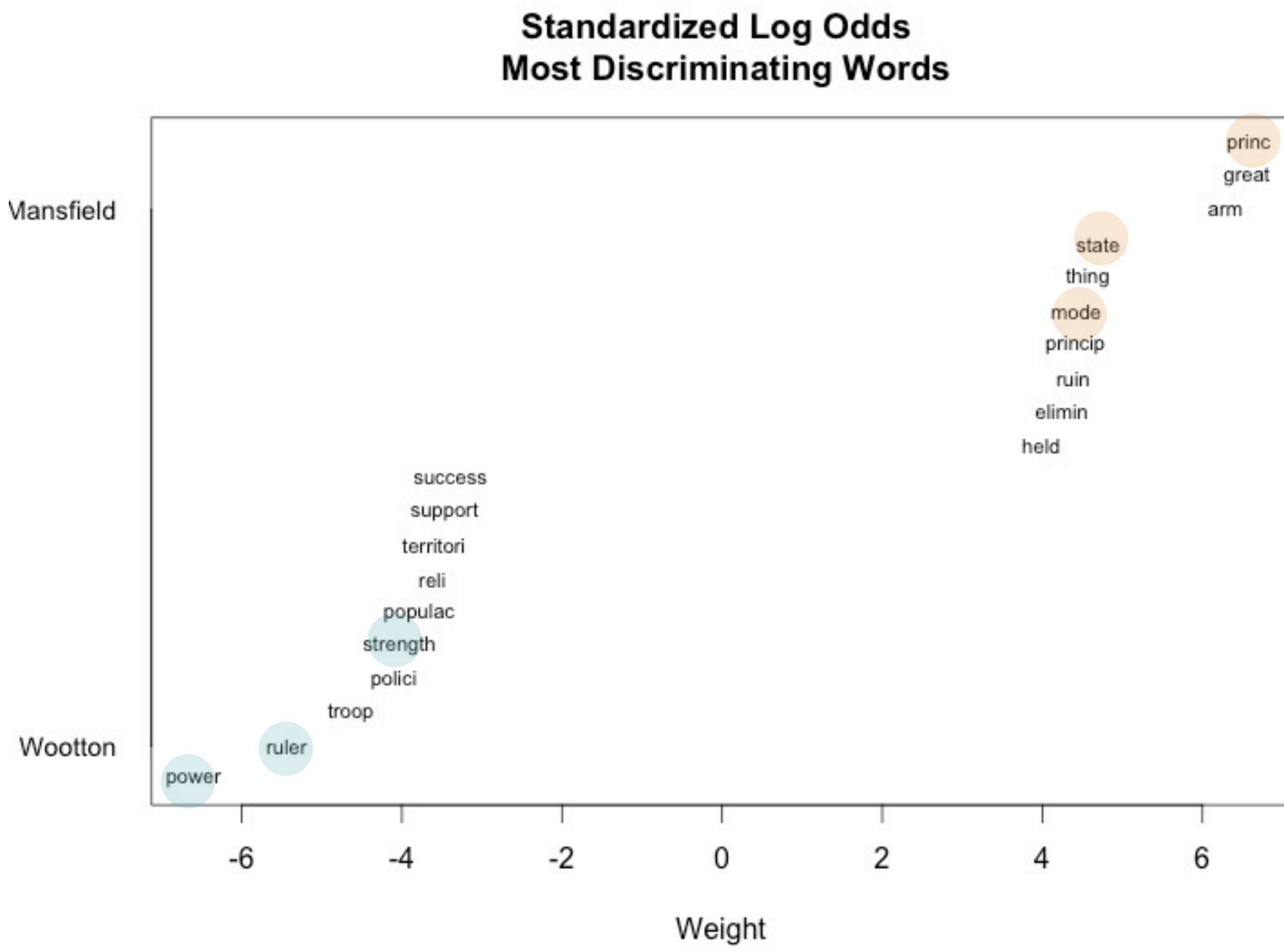


### Principe/Stato

Chapter	Mansfield:	Wootton:
19	A <b>prince</b> who wants to maintain his state is often forced not to be good	A ruler who wants to hold on to power is often obliged not to be good.
18	Let a <b>prince</b> win and maintain his state: the means will always be judged honorable	If a ruler wins wars and holds on to power, the means he has employed will always be judged honorable.
15	One should not care about incurring the fame of those vices without which it is difficult to <b>save one's state</b>	You have to be astute enough to avoid being thought to have those evil qualities that would make it impossible for you to retain power.

### Necessity

Chapter	Mansfield	Wootton
12	In order to secure themselves, they were forced of <b>necessity</b> to kill him.	In order to neutralize him, they <b>had to</b> kill him.
18	Men are so simple and so obedient to <b>present necessities</b> that he who deceives will always find someone who will let himself be deceived.	People are so simple-minded and so preoccupied with their <b>immediate concerns</b> , that if you set out to deceive them, you will always find plenty of them who will let themselves be deceived.
23	Men will always turn out bad for you unless they have been made good <b>by a necessity</b> .	You will find men are always wicked unless you give them <b>no alternative but</b> to be good.
7	War is just to <b>whom it is necessary</b> , and arms are pious when there is no hope but in arms.	A war is just if there is <b>no alternative</b> , and the resort to arms is legitimate if they represent your only hope.



### Reflections on the Translation

Virtue	Principe/Stato	Necessity
Virtue is thus role-specific: virtuous soldiers are strong and brave, virtuous generals intelligent and determined...The virtuous man is the man who has those qualities that lead to success in his chosen activity...He will identify opportunities where others see only difficulties, and recognize necessity where others believe they have freedom of choice (Wootton).	Sometimes Machiavelli uses stato where we would use "government" or "power,"...But stato sometimes means something closer to status: The Medici were not heads of state, but they had uno stato, a particular, private power... <b>To be un principe is to have un stato, but Machiavelli uses both terms to cover a wider range of cases than our terms ruler and state (Wootton).</b>	The world has its necessities not in intelligible definitions or essences but in patterns of behavior...A human can choose his nature rather than be enslaved by it, but his choice must still follow what he knows to be his necessity...Our unique human faculty of choice is set to the task of calculating, not the transcendence, but the greater efficiency through human versatility of subhuman instincts (Mansfield).