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# Fields, Markets, Institutions and Networks

Gisèle Sapiro

**Abstract:** *Relations in sociology are conceived differently depending on the premises. The chapter first discusses three paradigms: functionalism, interactionism and genetic structuralism. Network theory relies on interactionist premises, in contrast with field theory, which considers that objective relations, based on an unequal distribution of forms of capital, condition individual action. While network theory is thus incompatible with field theory, the chapter shows that network analysis can be used as a method to explore relations within fields or transfers across (national) fields. Examples are given from two surveys on literary and scholarly translations, focused on publishers as intermediaries.*

**Keywords:** Field Theory; Multiple Correspondence Analysis; Network Analysis; Relational Approach; Sociology of Translation.

## 1. Introduction: three paradigms of relational sociology

Relational approaches in sociology are divided between three paradigms: functionalism, interactionism and genetic structuralism. Although they may share some assumptions, these three paradigms rely on premises that are not compatible. Interactionism, which underlies network theory, and genetic structuralism, which approaches the objective relations structuring the social space, both reject the functionalist paradigm, which tends to think of systems as integrated and achieving equilibrium. However, the relational approaches of interactionism and genetic structuralism are different.

Network analysis has developed in sociology as an alternative to the Parsonian functionalist paradigm, which placed emphasis on institutions, organizations, norms and social roles (see for instance the seminal article by Granovetter 1973). It developed in economic sociology, in order to describe markets. It generally relies on an interactionist paradigm. Interactionism defines society as emerging from interactions. In this sense, it is opposed to holism, which considers, following Durkheim, that the social structure precedes the individual agents.

Genetic structuralism was developed by Bourdieu. His theory of the social structure is more holistic than interactionist, and shares this with functionalism. The social structure is more or less crystallized in institutions, it does not arise from individual action, but conditions and orients it. It thus cannot be reduced to a “context” of individual action, since individuals bear themselves the social structure in their bodies. But, by contrast with Parsons, Bourdieu’s functionalism draws from Marx and Weber, and from conflict theory, i.e. the competition for limited resources and uneven power relations. The social structure depends on the unequal distribution of social properties, considered as kinds of resources or of capital: individuals endowed with a high amount of economic capital contrast with those who are deprived of economic capital (Bourdieu 1979/1984a). The relations are dynamic and organized by struggles. Bourdieu added to Marx the cultural capital and the social capital, a concept that is widely used in network analysis (Bourdieu 1986, 1991). In genetic structuralism, social capital is only one type of resource, which does not act separately from the other types of (cultural and economic) capital. Although social capital is sometimes combined with “human capital” (Lin 2001), network theory often privileges it as an explanatory variable, rather than other ones such as reputation (or symbolic capital). Network theory emphasizes the conditions of access to information, opposing “cliques”, where density of relations between individuals creates redundancy, to “structural holes”: the individuals who bridge these holes hold a greater amount of social capital (Burt 1992, 1995). This approach does not say much, however, about the strategies of information retention that are widespread in competitive milieus. Moreover, network analysis does not distinguish different types of social capital according to its origin: inherited vs. acquired through education or professional training, or according to its location: within or outside a specific field, two distinctions that can be heuristically derived from Bourdieu’s theory.

His field theory takes into account the relative autonomy of some activities, like literature, music, art, science, law, from the global social structure (on the scientific field, see Knoiblauch in this volume). These activities have their own rules governing a specific competition around the issues at stake in the field, which cannot be reduced to economic constraints, nor political ones. They have their own history to which they refer to (as illustrated by the legal, scientific, or art fields). Bourdieu first developed this concept of field to describe the literary world. It was in the 1960s, before his objectivist approach of society was stabilized, and his first approach was interactionist (Bourdieu 1966), but he soon rejected it to adopt a more objectivist theory of the field, based on the objective relations between the agents’ social properties (he used Max Weber’s analysis of religion, and especially the opposition between

the priest and the prophet; Bourdieu 1971). The field is described topographically as a space of positions related one to the other, and a space of position-taking which is homologous to the space of positions (Bourdieu 1984b/1993a). The literary field is structured around the opposition between writers endowed with a high amount of symbolic capital (the dominant), like literary prize winners, members of academies, or famous writers (what is called today in the publishing world “brand names”), and newcomers or outsiders, who are deprived of symbolic capital (the dominated). And the second structuring opposition is between autonomy and heteronomy (Bourdieu 1983, 1992/1996, 1993b; Sapiro 2023a).

The relational approach implied by field theory is thus irreducible to interactions. It comes from phonology (Saussure), which was interested in significant differences, and assumes that individuals define one another regardless of the effective interactions between them (which can of course exist or materialize at some point, but can also mask objective relations: for instance, high competition between agents often expresses the proximity of the positions they occupy in the social space or in the field).

The literary field, and fields in general, should be understood as relational spaces endowed with a certain autonomy towards the market on one hand, and the state (or any other centralizing institution) on the other (Sapiro 2003a). The market is a space where the demand rules the supply and arbitrates the competition between producers. The idealistic classic representation of a totally free and auto-regulated market is of course a myth of liberal thought, widely used by economists, but we can use it as an ideal type of the possible range of social organizations of the production of goods and services, with at the other extreme another ideal type that can never be totally achieved in reality, that is to say the centralized regulation by a monopolistic institution (state, Church or any other institution in a specific domain): totalitarian states strove to reach this centralized control of the supply of products and services in all domains of social life, but as we know, this was never entirely achieved.

Fields can be located in between these two extremes: while some fields are more centralized around a monopolistic institution such as the Roman Catholic Church or the legal field, others are much less regulated, like the modern literary field. The rise of a market of symbolic goods helped the literary field get autonomy from state control (Bourdieu 1971b/1985). The notion of field is a conceptual tool to construct the object in a relational manner, by identifying the relatively autonomous structure of objective relations which organize the activity in question. Its relative autonomy is not given, the degree of autonomy has to be studied. For instance, the unions of writers in communist countries were centralized bodies aiming at controlling the literary activity, but despite the attempt to monopolize literary activity,

opposition developed in the underground. Although the literary issues at stake were not autonomous from the political stake, a certain degree of retranslation of political stakes into literary stakes can be observed.

## 2. MCA and network analysis

Bourdieu did not use network analysis, but I have argued elsewhere that, although field theory is theoretically incompatible with network theory, network analysis can be used as a descriptive method – rather than an explanatory tool – for analyzing fields or relations between fields (together with MCA, which is the most adequate tool for describing the objective structure of relations organizing a social space, a field, or a sub-field; for a comparison of the two methods with the same data, see Denord 2015) (Sapiro 2006).

The network of interactions within the field or across fields can indeed be explained by objective properties: the avant-gardes, for instance, tend to gather in small circles, around a journal, and to function as a sect (the symbolists and the surrealists are an example). The structure of a sect is that of a “clique”: a close and dense network of relations, clustered around a prophetic figure (for a study of the French poetic school of the Parnasse as a sect, see Ponton 1976). This structure results from the social properties of its members: it is because they are deprived of symbolic capital that they gather in a group, which will help them to achieve recognition on the literary scene and accumulate some symbolic capital (Sapiro 2003b). Although this structure has an impact on their activity, its evolution depends also on the objective properties of the members: generally, the cohesion of the group begins to fall apart when some members accumulate enough symbolic capital to be recognized individually and are able to compete with the prophet; the group can then become an obstacle to an individual career, as it happened in the surrealist group.

In my research on the French literary field under the German occupation, I used the notion of “networks” qualitatively to analyze how the literary Resistance emerged (Sapiro 1999: 484 *sq.*/2014: 374 *sq.*). I demonstrated that recruitment of members into the first literary Resistance could be explained by literary rather than political networks, which were linked to literary journals. My analysis of these networks was based on qualitative sources. I used the concepts of literary affinity and of “structural complicity” to designate the relationships within these networks. Most of these writers had in common their dominated position in the literary field, since many of them were newcomers, but they also had accumulated some kind of specific

capital. These informal networks opposed the institutional and worldly sociabilities at the very official Académie française.

This emerged clearly from a prosopographical survey – or a collective biography – that I conducted on the social and literary properties of 185 writers. The data was processed with Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), a method for geometric representation of data which brings together individuals sharing the highest number of properties and opposes those who have the least (Sapiro 2002, 1999: 87-88, 715-6/2014: 67-68, 565-6). Conversely, in the graphic of variables, the modalities that have the highest number of individuals in common are close (see the simplified representation graphic 1). The MCA provided a representation of the structure of the literary field. Although this is not a network analysis, networks are in fact coded through journals, academies, organizations (such as the literary Resistance body, the Comité national des écrivains, or CNE). One can distinguish networks that are interconnected and networks that are not. However, this is of course not a specific method for network analysis. A network analysis would probably have revealed the centrality of some writers as intermediaries between networks (like Jean Paulhan, who connected different journals and thus occupied a strategic position in a structural hole).

### Graph 1. The structure of the French literary field in the 1940s

(simplified representation of MCA; to see original graph: [https://www.persee.fr/doc/arss\\_0335-5322\\_1996\\_num\\_111\\_1\\_3166](https://www.persee.fr/doc/arss_0335-5322_1996_num_111_1_3166))



Network analysis proves useful for studying the inner structure of relationships between different groups, institutions or journals within a field. The questions it can answer pertain to segmentation, center-periphery, hierarchization. In the literary field (or other cultural fields), we can expect to find a segmentation along the structural opposition between autonomy and heteronomy, or according to genres (poets might publish in separate journals and gather in separate circles, for instance); and a hierarchization based on symbolic capital (capital of recognition). But we also need to ask ourselves whether the clusters constitute open or close networks (for example, academies are close selective networks, while professional associations are more open, even though there are criteria for becoming a member); and whether they are durable (an institution that survives its members) or ephemeral (manifestos); stable or not (literary salons); institutionalized (academies, professional associations), semi-institutionalized (journals) or weekly institutionalized (literary groups); collective (a group) or interpersonal (the network of people with whom a writer corresponds).

Network analysis can prove useful to analyze the relations between the cultural field and other fields: for instance between the literary field and the political field, the journalistic field, or the fields of theater, art, music. The differentiation of these fields is a rather recent phenomenon. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the literary, political and journalistic fields intersected: many writers earned a living as journalists. And many journalists pretended to be writers, but did not gain recognition. Network analysis can help us explore the intersections of fields (Denord 2015).

### **3. Translation networks across national publishing fields**

Network analysis can also be useful to study the relations between national fields. As an example, I shall now focus on the use of network analysis to explore intercultural transfers between national publishing fields through translation, based on my quantitative surveys on the international circulation of literary and scholarly books. This object of study requires to combine market, fields, networks and institutions.

The nationalization of cultural and publishing fields traces back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It occurred in an international process, which fostered exchanges (Sapiro 2013/2018). These exchanges are unequal. Translation flows circulate mainly from the center to the periphery (Heilbron 1999). Dominant languages export a lot but do not import very much. The share of translations in the American and British book production is very low (around 3%), it stands

between 15-18% in Germany and in France, 25% in Italy and Spain, 35% in Portugal, and reaches 65% in peripheral countries such as Korea (Heilbron 1999; Heilbron and Sapiro 2015).

The status of translated literature and scholarly books is different in these countries. It is prestigious in peripheral countries, while in central countries its position is marginal compared to the literary production in the national language. To exist, translation has to be promoted by networks of intermediaries and mediators.

### 3.1 Networks of literary translations

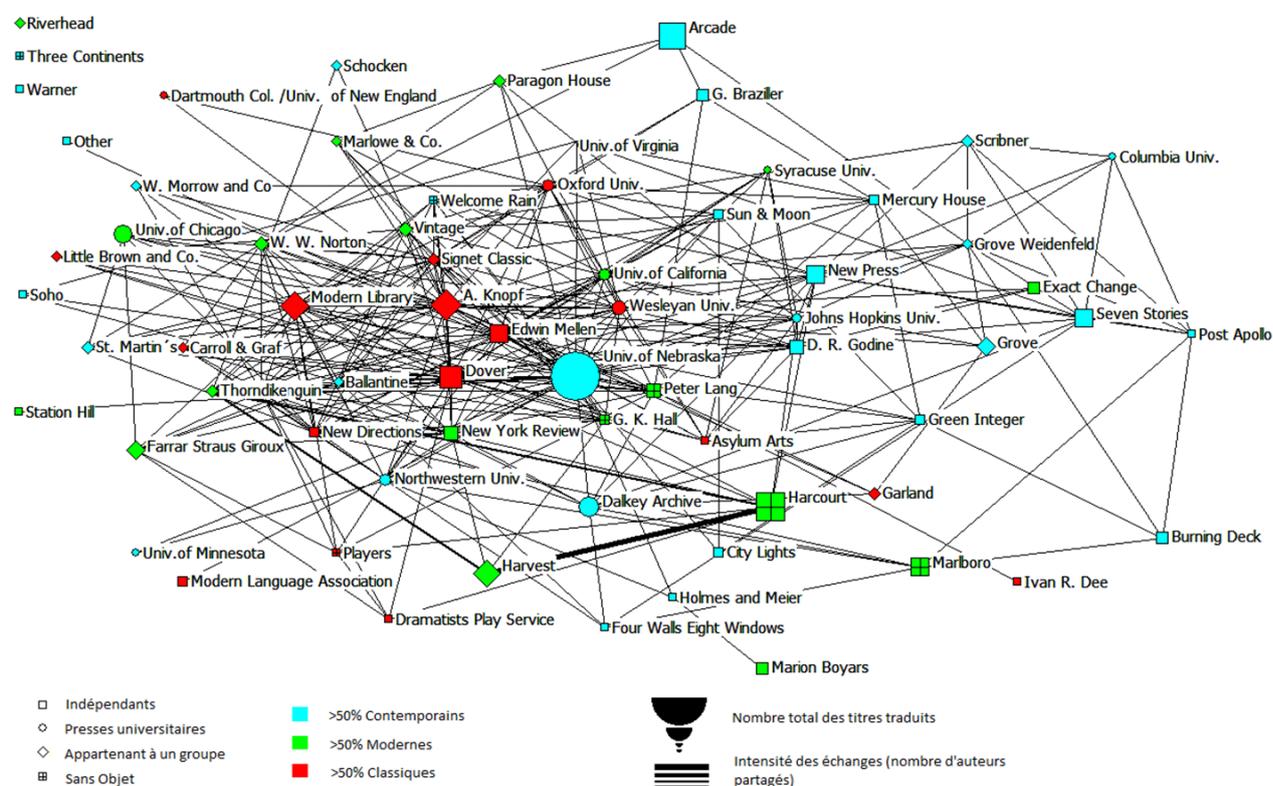
Such networks enabled the importation of French literature in the United States to continue in the 1990s, after the American publishers started to be reluctant to publish translations for economic reasons, as the interviews I conducted with these intermediaries and mediators revealed.

The quantitative part of the survey concerned literary works translated from French into English in the U.S. in the 1990s. The database of translated titles was extracted from the UNESCO Index Translationum and recoded (Sapiro 2015). New variables were inserted, among them the genre (novel, poetry, theatre...) and date of original publication, in order to distinguish three categories of books: classical, modern, contemporary. The network analysis focused on one category of intermediaries: publishers. The method of network analysis was used for two purposes. First, to explore the relationships between the American publishers who published at least five literary translations from French during the studied period (the link between them was sharing an author, which indicates similar interests). Second, to analyze the relationships between American and French publishers, which is an original use of network analysis developed by Mauricio Bustamante, who processed the data.

In order to interpret the results, a specific research on American publishers was done. Data was collected for a couple of variables, inspired by Bourdieu's survey on publishers (Bourdieu 1999/2008): the year the publishing house was established, its status, its (in)dependence with regard to conglomerates (the unit was imprints), its symbolic capital. The database of translated works served to code other modalities such as the number of works translated from French, and the relative share (more than 50%) of classical, modern or contemporary works.

*American publishers.* The relations between American publishers and imprints is represented in graph 3, based on their sharing a French author in their list: if they published works by the same author during the time period under consideration (1990-2003), they are connected. The thickness of the link indicates the intensity of links (the number of authors they share): for instance, the thick link between Harcourt and Harvest is due to the fact that Harvest is a paperback imprint belonging to the same conglomerate as Harcourt.

**Graph 2. The relationships between American publishers: shared French authors in translation** (source: Sapiro 2015)



The network analysis reveals the centrality of the University of Nebraska press, which shares authors with many other publishers, while for instance a publisher like Arcade is isolated. The structure of relationships also appears to be very dense on the left part of the graphic.

In order to interpret this structure, three variables (other than sharing an author) were projected on the graphic in order to characterize the publishers:

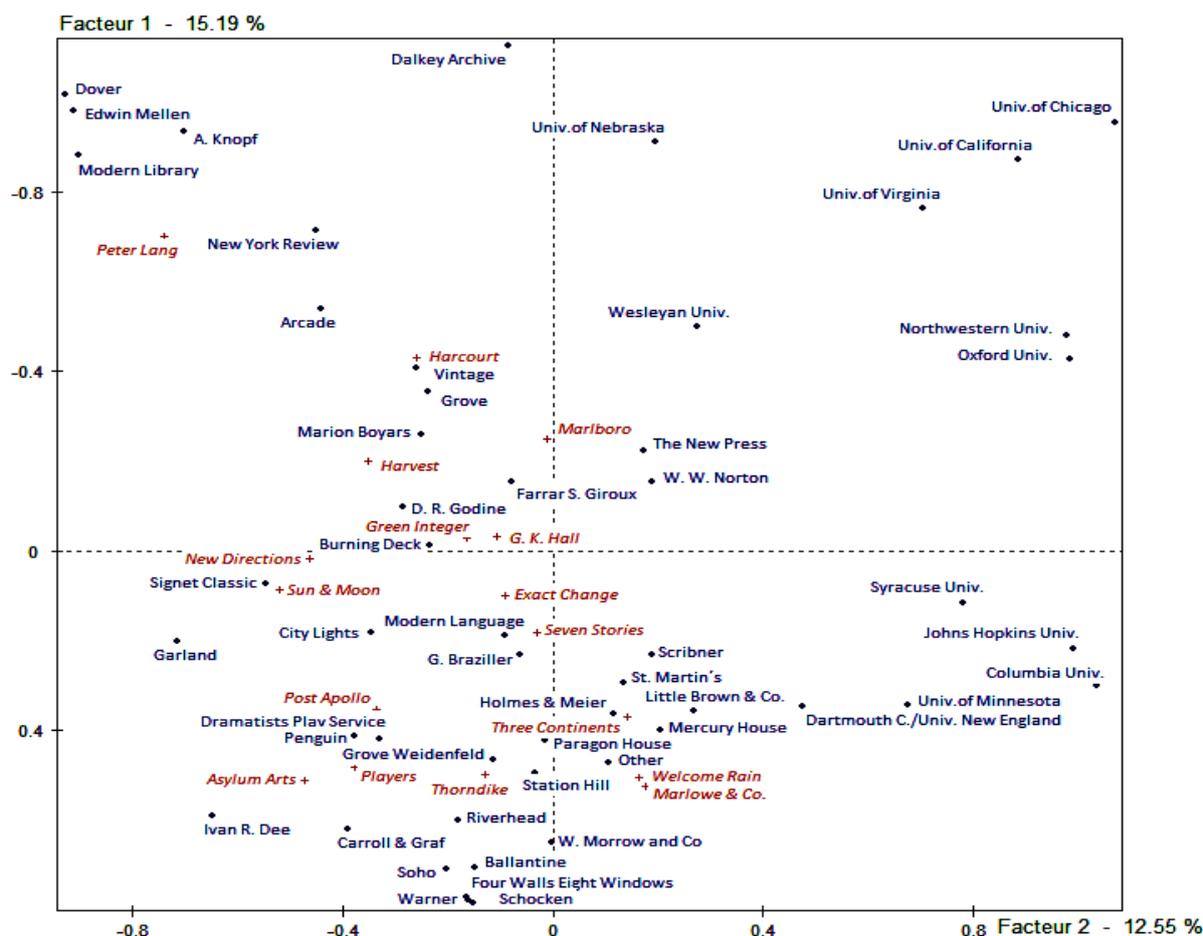
- the number of translations, indicated by the size of the circles or squares;
- the status of the publisher or imprint: university presses are designated by circles, independent publishers by squares, imprints in a large group by diamonds;
- what category of work they publish in translation: those who publish a majority of contemporary works are in blue, a majority of modern works in green, a majority of classical works in red.

These external variables enable us to interpret the structure of relationships. The network appears to be very dense among imprints publishing a majority of classical works, whereas the density is at its lowest among those publishing more contemporary work. The reason is that classical works are free from rights, some of them exist in different translations and editions from different publishers. They also share authors with the publishers publishing modern works, but much less with those publishing contemporary works. The latter are mostly small independent firms who usually follow one or a few single authors (like Jean Echenoz with the New Press, or Annie Ernaux with Seven Stories). Arcade, which has published many works translated from French, is apart because it has its own contemporary authors. The central position of the University of Nebraska Press is due to the fact that it connects different parts of the publishing field.

The MCA (graph 3) of the 69 publishers who published at least 5 translations from French included variables pertaining to their status (independent vs. non independent, profit vs. non-profit), symbolic capital, number of translations and so on. University presses (in the upper right quadrant) oppose the large trade houses (in the lower left quadrant). In the lower right quadrant are the small independent publishers. While the large trade publishers tend to reprint classics in translation as said, university presses invest more in the translation of modern classics, and small independent publishers in contemporary authors. This is consistent with Bourdieu's findings on the French publishing field, which showed that large established publishing houses tend to rely on assets, delegating the risk to introduce new authors to the small independent firms (Bourdieu 1999/2008).

**Graph 3. MCA of American publishers having translated at least 5 French literary works (1990-2003)**

13 variables and 45 modalities, of which 10 active variables and 31 active modalities (in red), and 3 illustrative variables and 9 illustrative modalities (in blue). The size of the square indicates the weight of the contribution to the axes.

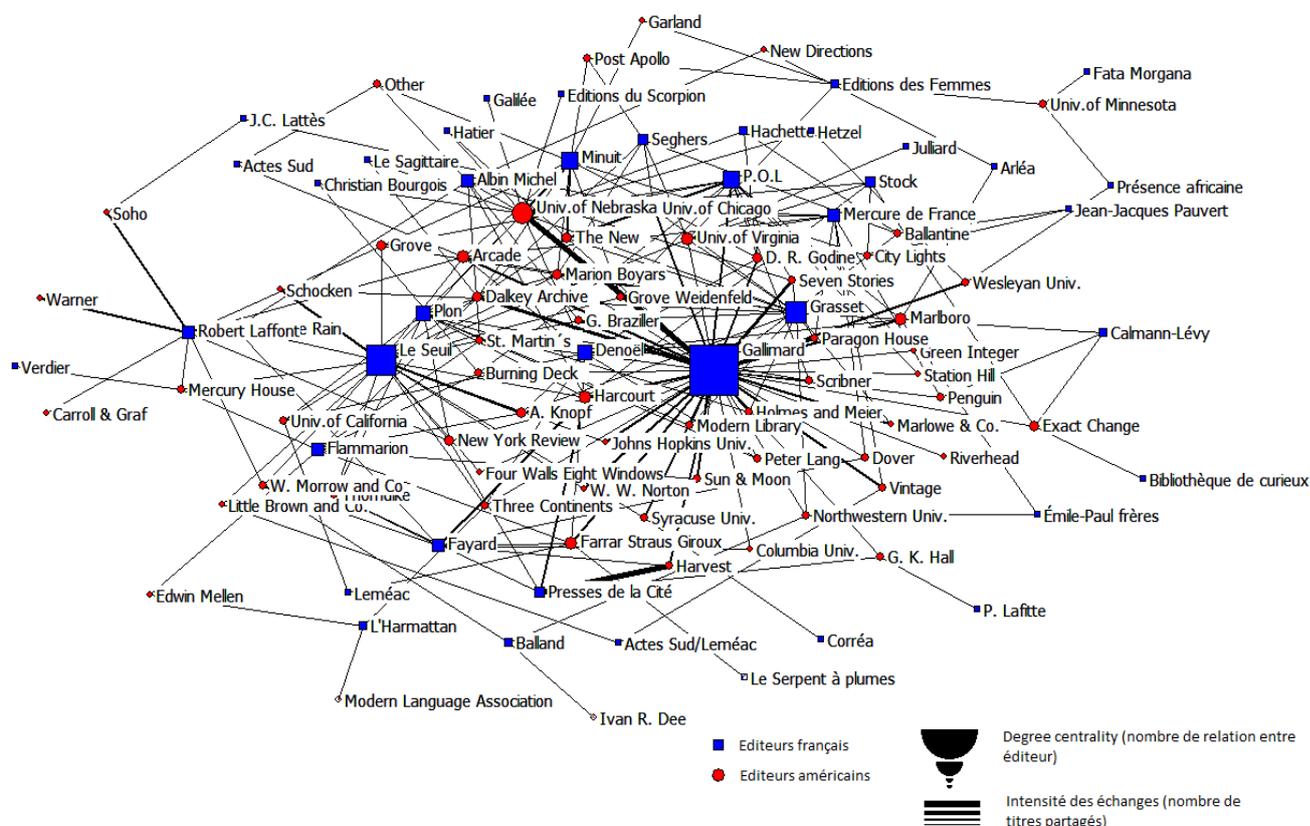


*Relations between American and French publishers.* The second network analysis displays the relationships between French (blue squares) and American (red circles) publishers. This is an asymmetrical matrix. The link is the number of titles shared (meaning that the American publisher translated a book from the list of the French publisher). The size of the squares or circles now represents the degree of centrality. This network analysis appears to be much more centered than the previous one. The French most prestigious publisher, Gallimard, is at the center. This publisher shares the highest number of titles with the American publishers, since it published 29% of the works that were translated during the period. These works were published in translation by a variety of publishers, from trade to university presses, through small independent ones. Le Seuil, the second most important publisher in French in terms of

symbolic capital, is at the center of another network. One can observe that it is not a “free” market, since the translation flows are not simply a function of the size of the publishers, but are related to their reputation or symbolic capital: Minuit and POL, two very small and prestigious independent publishers (Minuit published Beckett and the nouveau roman), export more than the larger Albin Michel or Fayard.

#### Graph 4. The relationships between American and French publishers (1990-2003): shared titles

Asymmetrical matrix of American and French publishers according to the number of shared titles, e.i. titles translated from French into English.



### 3.2 Scholarly translations

The second survey concerns translations of scholarly books from English, German and Italian into French between 2003 and 2013 (Sapiro, 2023b). Here I explore a subfield: the subfield of scholarly publishing, which is located at the intersection of the publishing field and the academic field. The concept of subfield is undertheorized in Bourdieu. However, in one of his 1984 lessons at the Collège de France, Bourdieu explained that “a subfield is not part of a field. There is, when one moves from field to sub-field, a leap, a qualitative change” (Bourdieu

2016: 24; my translation). He gives the subfield of criticism as an example. The change of perspective from the broader field to the subfield, which leads us to consider the part as a whole or the contrary, is justified by the fact that the whole exerts an action on the part (Sapiro 2020). However, subfields can also emerge at the intersection of fields, like the subfield of scholarly publishing (Sapiro 2023b).

The first network displays an asymmetrical matrix between the translated authors and their French publishers (graph 5). Publishers sharing the same author are competing here, rather than exchanging information. The network reflects the structure of the subfield: you can see the centrality of general trade publishers such as Gallimard, Flammarion and Seuil, along with scholarly publishers like PUF or Vrin, in importing foreign authors. A qualitative reading of the graphic shows that these publishers translate canonical authors such as Heidegger or Max Weber, whereas on the left you find more politicized and subversive authors, such as Butler and Spivak, introduced by small independent radical publishers.

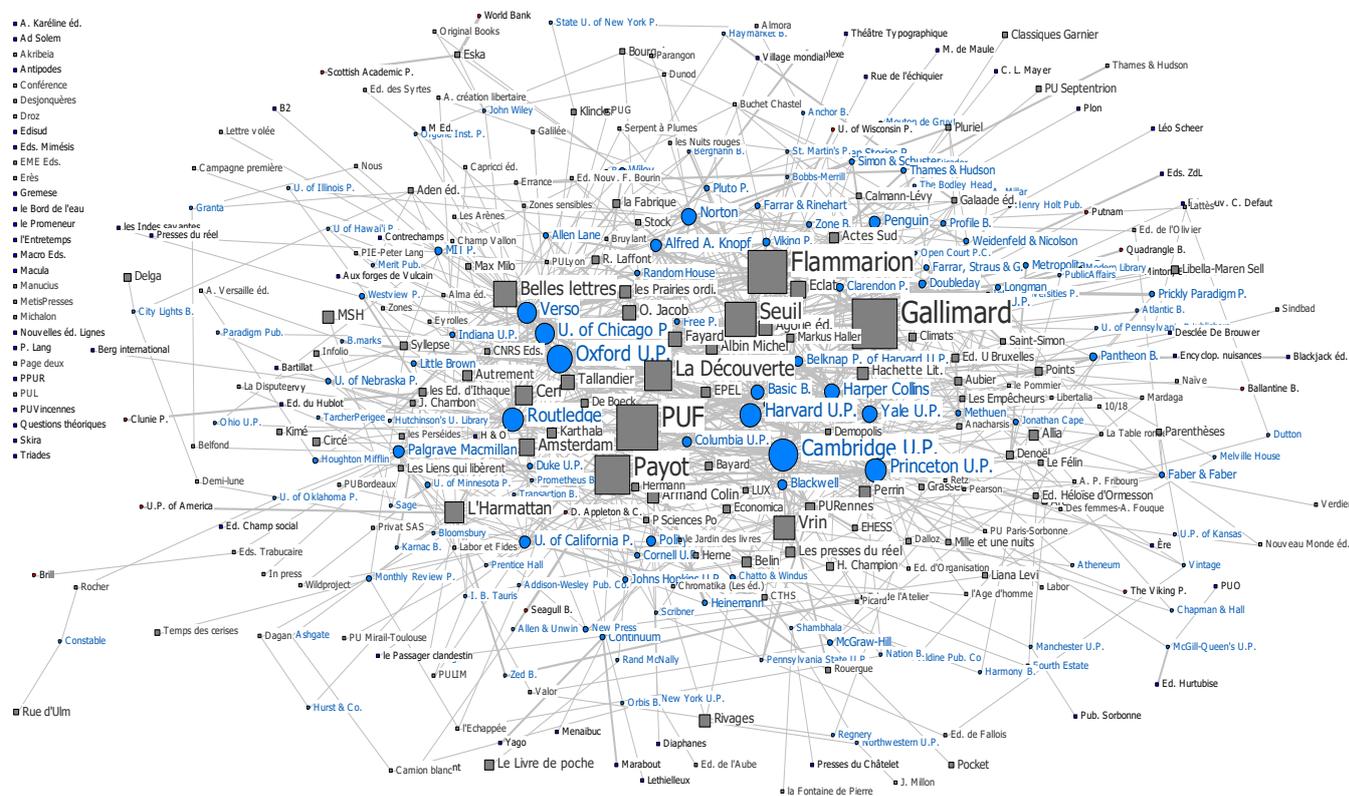
### Graph 5. Network of most translated SSH authors from English, German, Italian into French and their publishers (2003-2013)

French publishers having translated at least 3 titles and authors having at least 3 titles in translation.

In blue the publishers; in red the authors.

The size of the nod indicates the centrality according to the number of translated authors

(source: Sapiro 2023)

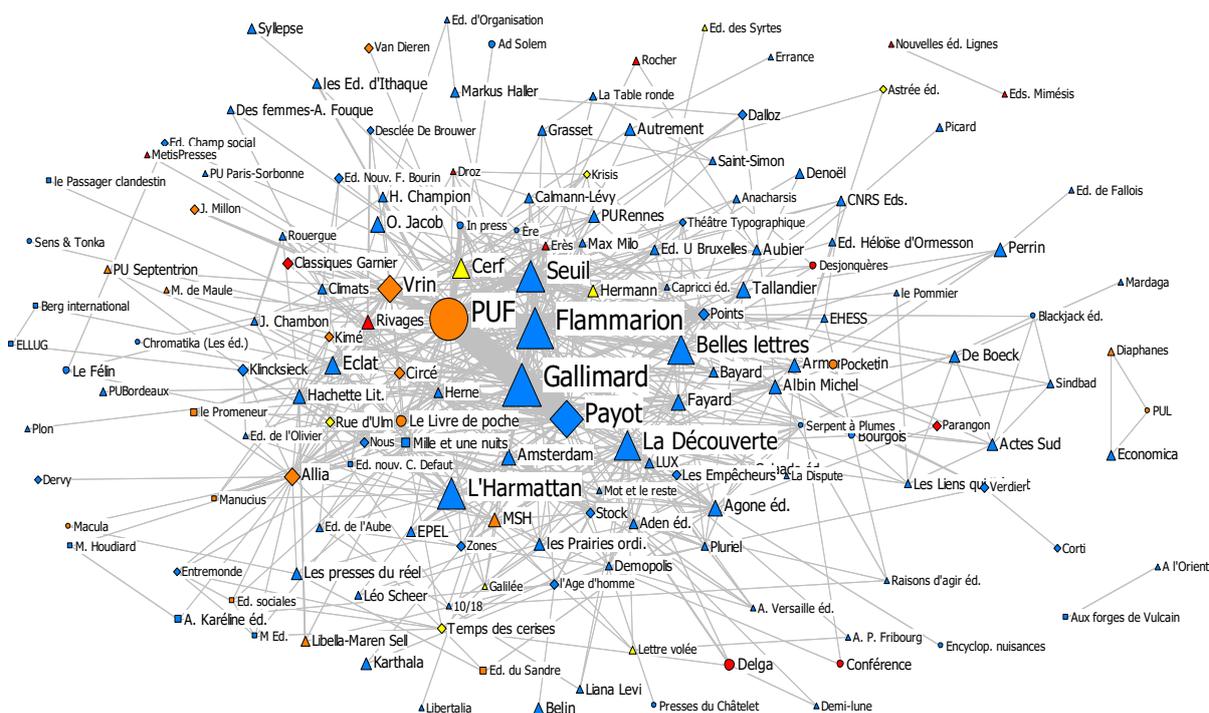




The last network analysis focuses on French publishers, distinguishing them according to the language from which they translate the most, and the period of the authors, distinguishing once again classical, modern (20<sup>th</sup> century) and contemporary authors (graph 7). The hegemony of the American social sciences is here made visible. Very few publishers translated more from German, and these are small scholarly publishers, e.g. Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, and even fewer and smaller independent ones translate mainly from Italian.

### Graph 7. Network of French publishers having translated at least 2 titles from English, German and Italian, according to the most translated language (2003-2013)

The ties are the number of shared authors. The dimension of the nod represents the number of titles translated. The color indicates the most translated language: blue for English, orange for German, red for Italian. In yellow publishers who translated the same amount of books from different languages. The form of the nod signals the author's period: squares publish more classics; circles publish more XXth Century authors; triangles more contemporary ones; diamond: same proportions. (Source : Sapiro 2023).



## 4. Conclusion

We have seen that network analysis can be combined with field analysis. It can be a heuristic tool for exploring the relations between fields, literary transfers between national (publishing) fields, and the international circulation of works, under the condition that one does not stay at the level of interactions to interpret the results. As shown, the projection of other properties and the qualitative knowledge I have about the publishers is what enabled me to interpret the network analysis. However useful for certain purposes, network analysis is not the only tool of analysis and not always the most relevant. Charts, maps and graphs can be more relevant in certain cases: for instance, maps help objectify spatial relations (Moretti 2005), and especially, in the case of the market for symbolic goods, spatial concentration or dispersion (Sapiro 2015: 346). Network analysis cannot replace prosopography nor Multiple Correspondence Analysis, but they can be complementary.

The network analysis showed that the centrality of intermediaries in fields or subfields does not depend on their size and economic capital, as in a “free market”, nor can it be said to be regulated by a single institution, despite the role of state subventions (the university presses are, for instance, totally marginal in France in the subfield of scholarly publishing). The centrality of original publishers in the network analysis corresponds to the reputation or symbolic capital accumulated by the publishers, which underlie their capacity to introduce and impose books and authors on a foreign book market. Thanks to its relational approach, field theory also enables us to move from the macro-level of circulation flows, to the meso-level of institutional policies (for instance publishers or literary agents), and to the micro-level of individual strategies (of editors, agents, translators, authors, critics and so on) (Sapiro 2012).

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