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Choosing Books for Translation: A Connectivity Perspective on International Literary Flows and Translation Publishing

> The bone marrow of globalization is connectivity, which is layered, multidimensional and multi-purpose and sprawls in all directions. We don't argue about connectivity because it is basic to everything. (Nederveen Pieterse 2021, 37)

1 Introducing Connectivity

This chapter explores the notion of connectivity and its application to research into the international circulation of literature. It does so in two principal ways. Firstly, it reinterprets the well-known *Index translationum* dataset from a connectivity perspective as an alternative to centrist and universalist approaches. Secondly, it analyses interviews with publishers and editors about their translation and acquisition practices to investigate connectivity in contemporary publishing and explore how circuits of connectivity cast light upon the ways editors and publishers choose books for translation. While connectivity is universal and global, exploring international literary flows from the perspective of connectivity means deconstructing universalism and recognising that literary exchanges happen within unaligned layered circuits of connectivity with their own internal rules and external boundaries.

One of the key concepts of global studies, connectivity (Nederveen Pieterse 2021; James and Steger 2016; Robertson 2016) is, for the first, a phenomenon of technology and communication that involves exchange of information. While it is often taken to refer to the instant, continuous and global nature of online connections, connectivity can also include other forms of information exchange available in a given historical era and geographical location, with mail, travel and trade being typical examples. Connectivity is dynamic and constantly evolving in line with technological advancements. It is also a socio-cultural concept that highlights connections between individuals based on social practice, shared views, and

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experiences. While connectivity as related to communication depends on physical infrastructure of some kind, the socio-cultural dimension is less tangible and traceable yet creates a sense of synchronicity and belonging.

Connectivity brings people together, it is omnipresent, ordinary, and barely perceptible, until it is broken, or we experience its limits, disconnectedness. This is because connectivity also creates new boundaries that define circuits of connectivity. Communication infrastructure and technologies for road, mail, telegraph, phone, and Internet systems increase the connectivity of some groups but also produce pockets of isolation since the technologies are not evenly distributed throughout the world. Other circuits of connectivity are organised according to social practices and socio-cultural factors including but not limited to politics, law, and language.

The identification of circuits of connectivity is facilitated by pattern recognition and analysis (Nederveen Pieterse 2021, 35–60). A single instance of communication or translation does not imply a circuit of connectivity since it does not reveal any signs of ongoing agency. Instead, this instance may represent an attempt to establish such a circuit or merely some haphazard action. Identifying circuits of connectivity and discerning their similarities and limits are crucial steps for the analysis of similar phenomena and the different forms and meanings they assume in different settings, locally, regionally or globally. As Nederveen Pieterse puts it, "[t]he contribution of Global Studies is not to promote the global, but to deconstruct the global, to deconstruct that which is claimed to be global" (2021, 55).

Circuits of connectivity are layered, meaning one can find oneself in multiple partially overlapping yet unaligned circuits of connectivity at the same time. Some circuits are clearly defined and demarcated, others have fuzzy borderlines. For instance, some circuits of connectivity are composed of diverse groups of friends or colleagues; other involve political alliances between countries. During the Cold War, political decisions led to the demarcating of geopolitically defined circuits of connectivity with extremely limited interconnectivity. In another example, the exchange of cultural products like books or films in a circuit of connectivity based on a shared language – including an acquired second language – is often limited or disrupted by different legal frameworks or specific distribution channels, creating sub-circuits of connectivity: books published in the UK may be excluded from distribution in the USA, Canada or Australia. Yet, these books are privately accessible to readers from different continents.

These circuits of connectivity at once expose the limits of current connections and expand our awareness of our own and others' connectivity. As Robertson (2016: 6) reminds us, connectivity is closely related to consciousness. Although consciousness does not derive from connectivity, connectivity expands consciousness including specifically the consciousness of connectivity itself. Individuals are

made aware of the circuits of connectivity available to them and also potentially of the limits of established links. The imagined connectivity circuits that arise from this consciousness are as important as the actual connections. Connectivity and the expansion of consciousness, however, do not automatically enhance human agency.

For the study of international literary exchange, the concept of connectivity provides an alternative to universalist and centrist approaches such as Wallerstein's world systems model by emphasising the global nature of connectivity (Nederveen Pieterse 2021, 61–78). Here "global" does not necessarily mean universally applicable but instead refers to the global diversity of situations that give rise to translations and other acts of international literary exchange. A global approach seeks to shift the focus away from issues of domination and the opposition between (uni-)centrality and peripherality. Instead, it addresses the layered nature of global literary transfers.

2 *Index Translationum* and Circuits of Connectivity

The reliability of the *Index translationum* data has been questioned by many scholars, however the dataset has been employed at least as often (Heilbron 1999; Poupaud, Pym and Torres-Simón 2009; Abramitzky and Sin 2014). If large datasets are interpreted with caution, then their intrinsic imperfection need not invalidate central arguments. Johan Heibron (1999; 2010) used the dataset in combination with some other national dataset to underpin his theory of world system of translation. Inspired by Immanuel Wallerstein's world systems theory, Heilbron argues that translation work derives from, and is embedded in, a world system that is organised on a core-periphery model. The position of individual literatures is determined based on the global proportion of translations undertaken from the source language into any other language. On this model (Heilbron 1999, 434; 2010, 2), the English language and literature written in English occupy a hypercentral position since more than 50 percent of all translations published around 1980 were translations from English. A few other languages are categorised as central or semiperipheral while the majority of world languages fall into the peripheral category with a global share of less than 1 percent.

The centre-periphery model has prompted diverse research into international literary circulation, investigating obstacles to this circulation (Sapiro 2012) and potential strategies by which they may be overcome (Van Es and Heilbron 2015; Mansell 2020; Heilbron and Sapiro 2018). Other studies highlight

concepts like supply-driven translation to address the perceived lack of demand for non-central literatures (Vimr 2020). At the same time, the assumed position of the source literature or language in this system tends to be the starting point for and the main focus of any discussion of international literary transfers.

An alternative approach to the logic of international literary circulation can be found in the work of Pascale Casanova, who draws on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the field. Casanova (1999; 2002) describes the emergence and development of an autonomous international literary field that is structured by the unequal power relations between cultures based on their literary capital. The latter is measured by the number of works that have entered the world literary canon. Through translation and inclusion in the world literary canon, literatures accumulate symbolic capital and assume a more dominant position. This gives them a long-term advantage over other subordinated literatures and creates and consolidates profound imbalances in international literary exchanges. Much like the world systems approach, Casanova's dichotomy tends to reduce the discussion on international literary exchange to the issue of the domination of a particular language in a given historical era. The result of these centrist approaches is that in the discussion of recent global literary circulation, English is often reinforced as the dominant or hyper-central language and the key mediating language (Casanova 2015, 123–30; Sapiro 2015; Allwood 2021), while the global diversity of situations remains largely unnoticed.

The interpretation of the *Index translationum* data is instructive in this regard. In 1999, Johan Heilbron combined the dataset with other sources to propose the above-described onion-shaped centrist cultural world system. In contrast, just a few years earlier, in 1992, Anatolij Šajkevič had produced a bibliometric analysis of the *Index* dataset with vastly different results.[1] Instead of analysing global translation numbers from a particular language and measuring an abstract degree of worldwide centrality, Šajkevič studied the target groups for whom the source languages and literatures were important. He measured the proportion of specific source languages among translated books in each target country and established target country-specific linguistic spectra, while comparing it to the total, or world-wide linguistic spectrum (Šajkevič 1992, 68–70). While the world-wide linguistic spectrum, Šajkevič observed, only changed slowly, and it was increasingly dominated by English (the same data that had led Heilbron to identify the English language as hyper-central in the world system of translations), the linguistic spectra

1 Neither Heilbron's nor Šajkevič's model could be replicated since the *Index translationum* data have not been available online for almost two years. The official website (www.unesco.org/xtrans) was last checked on December 16, 2021.

differed substantially from country to country. Country-to-country similarities were, thus, the basis for a network analysis that showed three large country clusters with internally similar linguistic spectra for the years between 1960 and 1983. This network can be seen in Fig. 1 where three types of lines distinguish various degrees of similarity: double (the strongest), single (medium) and dashed (the weakest). The lack of any line means that the similarity is very weak or non-existent.

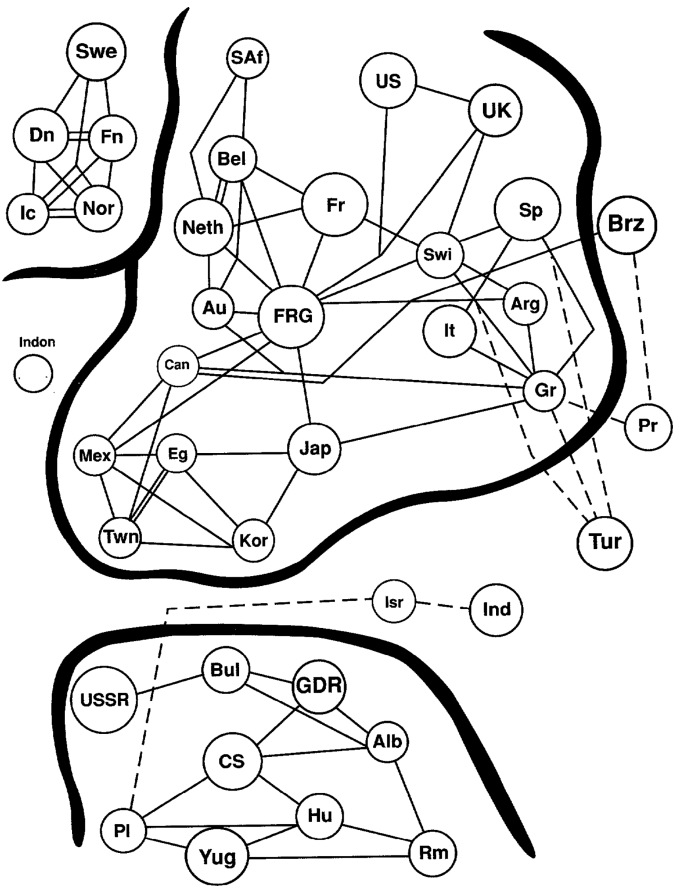

Fig. 1: Linguistic clusters of countries, 1960–1983 (Šajkevič 1992, 92). Reprinted with permission from Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal (PUM).

The upper left corner is occupied by five Scandinavian countries where a high proportion of translations take English or other Scandinavian languages as their source. The lower part represents the Soviet Union, Soviet satellite states

and Yugoslavia, all of which have a high proportion of Russian and a low proportion of English source texts. The central cluster contains countries that show little deviation from the world-wide linguistic spectrum. Clusters based on translated authors (rather than source languages) for the period 1975–1979 overlap substantially with the language-based clusters (Šajkevič 1992, 96). From a connectivity standpoint, people in countries that have more similar linguistic spectra experience greater synchronicity and contemporaneity with one another. Hypothetically, if bookworms from these countries meet, it is likely they will all have access to, and knowledge of, the same books and authors in translation (albeit from a third country or region). This, in turn, will give them a common conversation topic, a connection, with connectivity being at work.

Šajkevič's clusters reveal three circuits of connectivity based on different concerns. There is a socio-cultural Scandinavian circuit, a politically defined Communist circuit and a third circuit that perhaps cannot be described or analysed in more detail because of the imperfections and low information density of the dataset. Nevertheless, while these circuits and their boundaries may seem clear-cut, they are misleading in many ways, too. Although the circuits seem to operate on a single level, the socio-cultural and political versions in fact involve different dimensions of connectivity. Also, only one publishing format is represented (the book), but translations in literary magazines may be equally or more important in some countries or regions. Perhaps most obviously, Šajkevič's demarcation of a political (Communist) circuit of connectivity only reflects certain types of publishing, i.e. those from mainstream official channels that are represented in the *Index*. However unofficial underground publishing platforms in some Communist countries achieved a level of operation parallel to the official circuit (indeed the Polish term for samizdat was *drugi obieg*, which means second circuit). This circuit was important for the publication of both local authors and translations (Kind-Kovács and Labov 2013; Kind-Kovács 2014). Individuals active in samizdat publishing, whether as producers or readers, were, thus, part of an international circuit of connectivity that continually undermined the politically defined and censorship-enforced Communist circuit. Moreover, the wide range of translation publishing practices in place across the East-West divide during the Cold War suggests that the East-West interconnectivity can hardly be contained in a strict official vs. unofficial division (Popa 2006; 2010).

Whereas other publishing formats than books or the underground circuit cannot be identified from the *Index* because the data is not there, some circuits cannot be detected due the quantitative method. In a large-scale data analysis, a small group of authors and translations might easily slip under the radar despite their representation of a unique and important international circuit that allowed literature to cross a strict and ostensibly impenetrable divide. This is the case of

the "world republic of leftist letters," a circuit of connectivity across the Iron Curtain, especially in the early years of the Cold War, that combined political ideology with aesthetic values (Djagalov 2009; 2018; Dobrenko and Jonsson-Skradol 2018). While the chief aesthetic doctrine was socialist realism, it was based in the shared opposition to western economic and ideological values among intellectuals across the geopolitical divide. Both attitudes to this leftist circuit and the impact of being involved in it differed across the two spheres of the bipolar world. Western authors who wrote leftist critiques of the West and supported the Communist East, and especially the USSR, such as Howard Fast or Louis Aragon, had far more chance of being translated and published in the East; for everyone else, the prospects were minimal. The West was represented in the East by a relatively small number of writers. In the West, in contrast, membership of the world republic of leftist letters had a far less tangible impact on international literary transfers. Nevertheless, there were instances where an author was disconnected from some circuits as punishment for their affiliation with the Communist East. The Danish writer Martin Andersen Nexø, an adamant critic of the West and admirer of the Communist bloc, emigrated to the German Democratic Republic in 1951. As a result, German translations of his work were only published in Eastern Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and none appeared in West Germany for more than two decades (Vimr 2014, 151–56).

This brief exploration of connectivity with a starting point in the *Index translationum* dataset has revealed the limits of universalist and centrist approaches to the investigation of international literary flows from a global perspective because they tend not to consider the global diversity of translation situations and rather tend to focus on the issue of centrality and domination of a limited set of source languages and literatures. It has also demonstrated the strength of large-scale approaches in terms of exposing the key circuits and boundaries of connectivity. But at the same time, it has exhibited a major weakness of the approach involving the fact that many important circuits of connectivity may easily slip under the radar. Pattern identification that leads to the identification of circuits of connectivity needs to take place at multiple levels and scales at the same time. While some circuits like the official Communist circuit may produce many publications and leave behind a clear pattern enabling a high-level large-scale identification, others like the samizdat circuit may have more uneven output. Still others may be small-scale and time-limited; the relatively small influential ideological-aesthetic leftist circuit, for example, began to lose ground only a few years into its operation. Low-level and small-scale analysis involving qualitative approaches will be necessary for the latter instances.

3 Connectivity in Contemporary Translation Publishing

As we have seen, circuits of connectivity can be identified retrospectively through quantitative or qualitative analysis. However, they can also be uncovered by observing communication and decision-making processes as they evolve in real time. In what follows, I analyse a series of semi-structured interviews with publishers and acquisitions editors (n=47) in five smaller non-central European countries (the Czech Republic: 10, the Netherlands: 11, Norway: 8, Slovenia: 8 and Sweden: 10) to investigate connectivity in contemporary translation publishing. Although not representing different parts of the globe, these countries include the former political East and West and reflect a mix of cultural, social, and spatial proximities and distances as well as a major linguistic divide across Europe. All of the interviews were anonymised immediately after they were transcribed; they were carried out in English, Norwegian, Swedish or Czech; all translations are mine. While the main goal of this research was to examine the impact of subsidies on translation publishing decisions (Vimr: 2022), the interviews also considered broader information exchange and decision-making processes, including developments in recent decades. It is this latter part of the interviews that is discussed in this chapter. Acquisitions editors and others in similar positions play a key role in the decisions on acquiring translation rights that lead directly to the publication of translations (Franssen 2015b). Examining the links between connectivity on the one hand and the decisions of acquisitions editors on the other may reveal the underlying connectivity circuits that directly inform global literary transfers.

The topics related to connectivity arose naturally during the interviews and were often introduced by the interviewees themselves. Some of these issues have previously been the target of sociological analyses; this is the case, for example, of the abundance of data, texts and metatexts that acquisitions editors must sift through in order to make any decision (Franssen and Kuipers 2013). Sociological studies explain, for instance, how responsibility is distributed throughout the decision-making process, while global studies researchers consider the larger context of connectivity. Before I proceed to discuss circuits of connectivity, I will consider what the interviewees revealed about how connectivity in terms of information exchange and use of digital infrastructure and the consciousness of such connectivity impacts contemporary publishing on more general level. Internet and e-mail provide fast, easy and free ways for literary agents, foreign publishers and others to deliver information about their literary releases and pitch target country publishers about books in translation. At the same time, the constant receipt of new information and awareness of permanent

connectivity change how acquisitions editors behave. Subjective perceptions of connectivity may have as much impact on decision-making as actual instances of connection and information exchange.

As we have seen, connectivity alone does not increase agency but rather expands the awareness that everyone in the circuit is connected in the same way. When an acquisitions editor receives an e-mail about a book, they are aware that editors at other publishing houses may have received the same e-mail at the very same moment; a savvy scan of the pitch may even lead to an educated guess about who those other editors are. Particularly in the case of "big books" (cf. Thompson 2012, 188–222) – which are presumed to be or become international bestsellers and have greater commercial potential – publishers operate in a connectivity circuit that demands rapid action and high-stakes investments in books that have often not been written and whose prospects remain highly uncertain. This is a highly competitive environment where the "midlist has disappeared and the winner takes all" as publishers compete for the same books. A Norwegian publisher described the quest for the next big books: "We're a large publishing house, and so we have to take part in the big auctions, to be there in the competition and well-positioned when the next big thing comes along." The pressure to take immediate action is reinforced by a fear of missing out on a major international bestseller and of gradually falling out of the exclusive big books circuit.

The time pressure is exacerbated by the arrival of well-timed reminders that may be accompanied by more or less detailed information about competitors' bids. However, this awareness of instant connectivity and of agents' high-pressure strategies can easily have the opposite effect: publishers and editors may lose their sense of agency and take zero action. Here we see that although instant and ongoing connectivity helps to consolidate this circuit, consciousness of that connectivity can pull in the opposite direction. Decision-makers may reconsider their position in this market and their willingness to participate in its circuit. Many editors confirmed that combined with high acquisition costs and the uncertainty of this ultra-competitive market, the pressure from literary agents caused them to revise their strategy and adjust their profile. Some abandoned the big books circuit altogether, such as the following Czech publisher:

> We realised that we don't want to follow all the latest trends. We're not good at it, and we usually decide too late anyway. [. . .] As for auctions, we learned that they don't pay off, and luckily, we're in a comfortable enough position that we don't need to buy at auctions. [. . .] The market moves much faster now. Once, literary agents sent you a package of books. Now, they send a pdf and phone two or three days later to ask if it's a yes or a no and claim that they're already receiving offers. There's pressure to make a decision when we haven't even had enough time to read the book.

Digital connectivity has also transformed how publishers communicate with readers and made those readers part of publishing decisions to an unprecedented degree. Publishers are becoming increasingly reader-centric where they were once author- or bookseller-centric (Thompson 2021, 462–69). At the same time, self-publishing, crowdfunding, social media publishing platforms like WattPad and print-on-demand services are helping individuals and small publishing houses enter the book market, and thus, also putting pressure on traditional publishing and distribution models. Furthermore, for-profit publishers may benefit from the market-wide book sales figures that have become more accessible through commercial services like Nielsen BookScan (Childress 2012). For large and traditional publishers, less and less importance is attached to the expert opinions that reviewers (professional readers) provide to newspapers and magazines. Instead, publishers and acquisitions editors are turning to readers, reader data and the personal views expressed publicly on platforms such as goodreads.com. These services allow users to stay in touch with each other, form networks based on similar tastes and share reading lists, recommendations and opinions. Meanwhile undisclosed algorithms provide additional book suggestions based on undefined similarity traits, thus creating algorithmic circuits of connectivity. More than ever before, acquisitions editors refer to the insights of non-professional readers to support their decisions. For these editors, the focus is on gathering information about both the title under consideration and similar books on the market since similarity is arguably a key selling point for some publishers. Reflecting on a failed attempt to diversify a genre literature portfolio, one editor from a large Swedish publishing house who also claimed they regularly used goodreads.com to find out about new titles put it: "People want to eat more of the same food. They're not all that curious . . . Or our marketing is wrong." While large for-profit houses tend to rely on digital networks, smaller publishers may take a different tack and turn to international book festivals (which should not be confused with book fairs). The attendees of these events include readers, authors, translators and publishers.

Furthermore, connectivity, and more specifically the immediacy of e-mail communication and use of online auctions, has transformed the role of book fairs from business events into social gatherings. While information about books circulates constantly and translation rights for most books are sold outside book fairs, editors, publishers and literary agents have not abandoned these events. Meetings in person help reinforce or recalibrate their circuits of connectivity. Traditionally, personal contacts have been of the utmost importance to acquisitions editors and publishers. For many publishers, personal recommendations from international peers are the most reliable way to learn about new books, especially if editors share tastes and have comparable experiences with other books and

authors. Furthermore, if a book appears in the catalogue of multiple publishing houses with a similar profile in different countries, then editors may find it easier to defend the title to editorial boards. The tendency to imitate publishing decisions internationally leads to transnational isomorphism, which has a homogenising effect (Franssen and Kuipers 2013). This is especially true for for-profit and genre publishing while other segments – such as upmarket literary fiction – may exhibit more heterogeneity (Sapiro 2016, 93–94). From a connectivity standpoint, transnational isomorphism in commercial and genre publishing highlights the role of specific circuits of connectivity. These depend on various networks of actors and are associated with a range of publishing practices typical of large corporate publishers. At the same time, the long-term homogenising effect suggests a common pattern in transnational publishing among many publishing houses. That pattern should be discernible via data analysis, which may then prove the existence of this circuit of connectivity.

4 Pattern Recognition and Circuits of Connectivity

Apart from general trends, the interviews made it possible to investigate circuits of connectivity at work. As suggested above, pattern recognition is a crucial means of identification of circuits of connectivity for researchers. However, pattern recognition is also performed by publishers and other actors in the publishing field. The practice of transnational imitation leading to translational isomorphism suggests that decisions are driven by a basic cognitive capacity to recognise and analyse patterns along with a tendency to recycle them (cf. Neverveen Pieterse 2021, 54). Translation publishing involves various actors who range from scouts and literary agents to translators, publishers and booksellers. These actors operate within their own circuits of connectivity while also observing the publication and reception patterns of others further down the line. Literary scouts work for many publishing houses simultaneously, attempting to find new books that are best matched to each of them (Franssen 2015b, 63–84). To meet this goal, they identify, analyse and follow the publishing patterns of each house based on their publishing catalogues. These patterns establish the profile of the publishing house, and the scout, literary agent or translator aims to pitch a selection of titles that have the highest chance of succeeding and being acquired by the publisher. Publications patterns are just as important for acquisitions editors who are trying to sway an editorial board's final decision and for publishing houses in their communications with booksellers and readers. New books should be a good fit for the existing

catalogue and publishing pattern. If a book does not fit, editors tend to reject it irrespective of its quality, arguing that, as one large Norwegian publisher put it, "this book isn't for us. It should be published by someone else." This is because they know that their readers may not accept a book that strays from the pattern: "When readers and booksellers see the name of our house, they know this [book] is a bit tough to read and demanding. Which means that if we publish an author with bestseller potential, they're seen as a bit weird from the very beginning" (small publisher, Sweden).

At the same time, publishers are constantly assessing what others in the national market are publishing or may be planning to publish. If two books on a similar topic are launched concurrently by different publishers, chances are that one will fail. Similarly, if many publishers compete for a single book, the price of translation rights will be pushed too high. Publishers, thus, tend to define themselves in relation to others in the sector. Pattern recognition has a key role in book choices and related communication among all participants in the translation process. It can help editors develop a sense of continuity, define their areas of interest and assess what is right for a publisher (or imprint) at a given moment based on the publishing, sales and reception histories and an awareness of the possible actions of others in the sector. Nevertheless, this pattern identification is not a universal decision-making tool. As Franssen (2015b, 110) points out: "This 'identity' logic appears typical of a field divided into smaller niches, rather than a field where everyone competes with everyone in a general fashion." Indeed, when asked about the most important factors in book acquisition decisions, editors tended to start with the quality of the book (or their personal taste) and then cite personal networks and intuition.

Most editors and publishers rely on networks of friends and colleagues in the translation and publishing industries including literary scouts, trusted translators, literary agents, reviewers, professional readers and foreign editors. The pattern recycling strategy is a direct outcome of the use of these contact networks. Acting sometimes on request but most often unsolicited, all these individuals provide editors with suggestions and advice, and this input then needs to be processed. If an editor finds a book that matches their personal taste, they will use their intuition, which – based on their explanations of this concept – often involves assessing whether the book belongs to diverse circuits of connectivity at different levels. Here the aim is to intuitively select books that meet abstract criteria which connect their original text, author, culture, theme or other features to the target publishing house, its publishing patterns and readers. The publishing catalogues of affiliated foreign publishers are only a source of inspiration. Indeed, blind pattern recycling would undoubtedly lead to failure since no two book markets are the same. For a book to succeed in

translation, one or more circuits of connectivity need to be in place between the original and target cultures.

One of the most common of these circuits relates to *geography and geographic proximity* with editors opting for books from neighbouring or nearby countries. Geographic proximity goes hand in hand with cultural proximity and historical ties, factors which often also expand the pool of countries considered proximate. As one small Czech publisher commented:

> [O]ur segment is non-commercial literature, not entertaining or descriptive works, but literature that is more critical [. . .]. These are the friendly relationships that we've been building up in Central Europe over the past 20 years. We've been publishing authors from Slovenia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Poland, Germany [. . .]. We don't have the capacity to extend our geographical scope. I wouldn't be opposed to publishing a young Indian author, for instance. That would certainly be interesting, but we have no connections in the region. And we only publish some twenty books a year anyway, which isn't enough for all the authors we'd like to publish. We don't need any new networks and cover new territories.

While this perspective was expressed by a Czech publisher, Norwegian and Swedish publishers stated that they tend to apply the same principle and are keen to translate from other Scandinavian languages (compare the Scandinavian circuit of connectivity in Šajkevič's analysis). Similarly, Slovene publishers favour translations from other Balkan languages along with Italian and Hungarian. There are many reasons for these preferences: first, the source culture is often more recognisable to readers, who may have preconceptions about the geographically proximate country, its history and culture. Second, it is easier to keep in touch and exchange visits with authors and publishers who are located nearby. Moreover, it is cheaper and more practical for these authors to attend public readings in the target country.

Publishers also observe the titles published in translation in neighbouring countries but this information tends to be less influential, and personal networks have more impact on their decisions. Some publishers pointed out that their inferences may be negative. One mid-sized Dutch publisher put it: "If a book has been translated into French but not into any other language, it won't succeed here." Along similar lines, many editors suggested that there is a divide between the Germanic and Romance traditions in Europe. Some books, they reported, are in high demand in Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese, others in German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian, and only a few perform well in both groups of markets. This indicates that these two major macroregional circuits of connectivity operate in Europe. Interestingly, some publishers in the Czech Republic and Slovenia made similar claims though none of them located their own country within either circuit. As important as the UK and US markets are as sources of literature for translation, only a few editors said that

they follow the UK and US translation markets. This practice was most prominent in Norway, where it was backed by three publishers, while only one house from each of the other countries endorsed this approach. A small Norwegian publisher stated: "Massive success in the original country is not important – every market is different. Perhaps it matters if [the book] goes on through the English market. Norwegians follow the English market. [There are] similar reading cultures." Most often the significance of an English-language translation is that it gives the editor a version of the book they can read when the original work is written in a language they do not speak.

Another notable circuit of connectivity relates to the *topic of the literary work*, which may connect the author and the book to the new target audience. A mid-sized publisher in Slovenia summed this up: "There are different considerations. Usually, you're not only looking for a book but also for a context. [. . .] It's about the kind of messages you're promoting." Some themes may be timely in several countries at the same time. Currently, this especially relates to topics around gender, race and identity:

> We know, for example, that there's a young feminist movement and a movement interested in questions of identity and race, and so, of course, we have that in the back of our minds and notice when the topics a book is dealing with would really interest this readership. (Small publisher, Sweden.)

> Our [professional] reader says, "There's this theme about the lesbian community" and she suggests that this is a hot issue right now, this is what people are reading about, and I [the editor] say, "You're right." (Large publisher, Czech Republic.)

Other topics are more closely related to a specific region:

> [W]e need to have a selling point; it needs to connect with what's going on in Norway. We've published so many books that don't do that. They're too weird and obscure. (Small publisher, Norway.)

> I came across that work not long after [the author, who writes in a minor language the publisher had never translated before] won the EU literature prize, but I was mostly struck by the topic: Freud in Vienna. That connects to our history, so in this case, the topic made a real difference. I was surprised by how successful that book was. (Large publisher, the Czech Republic.)

Typically, when the connectivity circuit is based on a topic, the source language, source literature and often also the author are not pivotal for the editor provided that a suitable translator is available for the given language combination. In most other cases, editors who are pondering whether to introduce a previously untranslated author will assess the individual's overall potential, asking, for example, whether the book is part of a series and whether the author has written or

is planning to write another work of potential interest. When the connectivity circuit relates to the topic, the editor will consider the book alone since there are usually no plans to publish another title by the author or another work from the given literature if this territory is being explored for the first time. The publisher does not aim to sell and promote the author, but rather the book in question.

For some publishers, the key circuit of connectivity concerns *genre*. Typically, this relates to commercial publishers and genres such as crime fiction, thrillers, romance novels and chick lit. However, circuits of connectivity are also created around other genres like poetry, children's literature, comics (graphic novels) and highbrow literature, known as literary fiction in the publishing industry. A closer analysis reveals that genre-related connectivity is not straightforward. Rather it is historically situated and variable, with subgenres representing many layers of sub-circuits of connectivity. This includes distinct layers for the types of crime fiction published in Scandinavian countries on the one hand and for those published in the Netherlands on the other:

> Most books on the US bestseller lists don't sell very well here. Only a few do. If you take crime fiction as an example, it's too different from Scandinavian crime fiction, and the way it works . . . being interested in a specific genre doesn't mean you're also open to new stuff. Readers are perhaps more conservative. So, if it's too different from Scandinavian crime fiction, it'll be seen as too niche, too weird, too this or that . . . this has happened. In the past, English crime fiction was so popular that we used to compare Norwegian writers with English ones. Now it's the other way round: if we want to sell a foreign author, we have to compare them with one of our writers. [. . .] Swedish crime fiction is almost as popular as Norwegian crime fiction, but the Danish market is quite different. [. . .] In the Netherlands, they translate a lot, but if you look at the kind of crime fiction they buy, it's too explicit. That doesn't work here. (Large publisher, Norway.)

Some publishers base their activities upon a *niche* circuit of connectivity finding a sector not already occupied by other publishers in the given country or linguistic region. This tactic is often associated with smaller houses that focus on publishing translations from smaller literatures and less explored territories. One small Norwegian publisher commented: "One reason we focus on minor languages is that the big publishers don't really look at them. This is an opening for us to find the treasures the big players won't grab. And it's easy to get funding." These circuits are often clearly demarcated around specific national literatures, regions or literary styles. In Sweden, there are several publishers who focus on a single national literature (for example, French, Italian, Polish or Czech works). Elsewhere, certain houses only publish modernist fiction or concentrate almost exclusively on Russian fiction of the first half of the 20th century. Niche publishers often rely on external funding that can mitigate the risk of loss. Nevertheless, the bureaucracy

associated with the application process may lead to *red-tape-based disconnections* from the circuit:

> When we applied for funding in Brazil and Spain, the application form was 30 pages long. But when I apply in Finland, it's two pages in a large font. The Spaniards require lots of officially certified documents, signatures, a tax residency certificate. With all those stamps, the application process could easily cost more than what they'd give me in funding. (Small publisher, Czech Republic.)

Circuits of connectivity are not exclusive of one another, they are not aligned either, but they may overlap, and for a book to be chosen for translation, it normally needs to belong to more than one circuit, as Fig. 2 illustrates. Individual circuits may carry different weight in the decision-making process. There is no fixed, ideal or pre-defined number of connectivity circuits that editors consider.

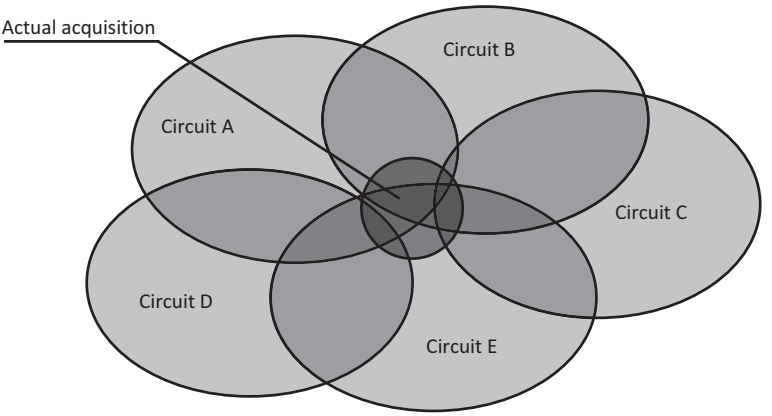

Fig. 2: Potential overlap of the multiple connectivity circuits that may influence decisions on acquiring translation rights. For the hypothetical actual acquisition, circuits A, B and E are the deal breakers, while circuits C and D are considered less important.

The examples of circuits considered in this section are by no means exhaustive. Rather they are merely some of the most common and observable circuits which editors hinted at during their interviews. Many circuits of connectivity are surely missing from this analysis because of the limited number and choice of target countries and the synchronic nature of my research. The data contained no evidence of any politically motivated connectivity circuit in Europe today comparable to the Communist circuit that was revealed in Šajkevič's analysis of data from the 1960s and 1970s. A more global, non-Eurocentric investigation could bring more breadth and detail to these findings.

5 Conclusion

When applied to research into the international circulation of literature, the notion of connectivity provides an alternative to centrist and universalist approaches by focusing on a global diversity of situations that give rise to translation publishing. In research into translation history from a large-scale perspective, the approach may help identify major circuits of connectivity in global literary circulation as exemplified by a re-interpretation of the *Index translationum* data. At the same time, it is apparent that to capture the whole range of situations, research cannot be limited to large-scale quantitative analysis. Small-scale qualitative approaches are necessary to reveal more circuits of connectivity including the layers that otherwise may slip under the radar due to multiple factors, such as low quality of the large dataset or relatively low numbers of datapoints that yet establish a pattern of remarkable translation activity.

The concept of connectivity is also enlightening when studying the current translation practice. Interviews with publishers and editors about their translation and acquisition practices prove the concept is revealing in at least two ways. First, it highlights the impact of connectivity in terms of using current communication technology and being conscious of global connectivity as practised by actors in the translation field. To a certain degree, connectivity, and more specifically the current communication practices based on current connectivity models, make publishers and editors redefine their identity, rethink their publishing choices and reconsider the circuits of connectivity they wish to take part in. Connectivity expands publishers' consciousness of their own and others' publication patterns. This, in turn, makes pattern recognition and recycling central elements of translation pitching, selection and publishing as well as promotion and sales.

Second, circuits of connectivity contribute to an understanding of global literary circulation as layered and diversified. The identification and analysis of circuits of connectivity exposes the granularity and situatedness of literary circulation. In addition, knowledge of connectivity circuits can clarify aspects of decision-making that may appear intuitive and arbitrary. To explain how acquisitions editors make choices, Childress (2012, 608) proposes the garbage can model in which "various combinations of previous strategies, beliefs, tools, lessons, and personal preferences are deployed in a haphazard and inconsistent fashion for any given project" (see also Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972). In contrast, the research described in this chapter suggests that there is more structure and logic to the process. Acquisitions editors tend to choose books that are part of multiple partially overlapping yet unaligned circuits of connectivity. These circuits also provide a link between the book in question and the publishing pattern of the target house, imprint or book series.

Each target linguistic space is a centre of its own but also embedded in a wider circuit of connectivity based on features that may range from a common history to linguistic, cultural and political affinities. This is particularly apparent from how geographic connectivity circuits combine with personal contact networks. Topic-based circuits of connectivity, on the other hand, explain how books by little known authors from unexplored territories may suddenly break through into many target territories at the same time. Finally, genre-based circuits and their sub-circuits and internal dynamics confirm (see also Franssen 2015a, 397) that large-scale and commercial translation publishing is more complex and less universal than is often acknowledged.

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ARRIVAL of CINEMA in the GULF
COLONIAL
MORAL "CIVILIZING" MISSION
CENSORSHIP
1919 - 1932
EACH vs INDIA
WESTERN vs LOCAL AUDIENCES
AMATEUR COLONIAL FILM
RESTRICTED ACCESS
EXCLUSIVITY
PRIVATE
1st IN GULF
OIL COMPANY
COMMERCIAL
SITE OWNED
EMPLOYEES (EXPATS ONLY)
INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT & DELAY
BUT WE CAN CENSOR!
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FEAR of GOVERNABILITY
COLONIAL ANXIETY
BRITISH IMPERIALISM & AMERICAN VENTURE CAPITALISM
ALARMIST DISCOURSE & POLITICAL CONTROL
LOCALS BANNED
EXPATS MAILED ABOVE
THE LINE BETWEEN HUMAN & NON HUMAN HAS BEEN DRAWN TOO FIRMLY
—THE AGENCY OF OBJECTS
AGENCY
CIRCULATION
BOUNDARY OBJECTS
CO OPERATION WITHOUT CONSENSUS
BEYOND MATERIAL
TIED TO PRACTICES
DERIVES from ACTION
TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS OF THE AVANT-GARDE IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD
TICI & UNESCO
MISSION to MAINTAIN PEACE
DISCREDITED BY OUTBREAK of WWII
A FRESH START
TRANSITION POLICY
LINES of CONTINUITY
PUBLICATION
LITERARY SERIES
INDEX TRANSLATIONUM
CROSSCODES
LITERARY
POLITICAL
INFERRING VALUE CANONISING
COLLECTIVE vs INDIVIDUAL AGENCY
PRIORITISE WIDELY SPOKEN LANGUAGES
UNESCO
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TICI
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