



Mapping Cultural Networks in the Global South Book Market

The Case of the Argentinian Shanghai Group

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Abstract. The unequal distribution of cultural goods from the Southern to the Northern hemisphere is supported by a range of mechanisms that often prevent their participation in global exchanges. The globalization of Latin American literature faces significant challenges, which has led to the development of social networks among cultural agents as a distribution and visibility strategy. This paper examines the relationships between the structure of the Argentinian "Shanghai" group (1982-2010), its sociability patterns, and the internationalization of its members using social network analysis. Additionally, it employs basic features of a geographic information system to depict the dual transfers of social and symbolic capital involved in surpassing local frontiers in the publishing market. The article demonstrates the importance of participating in a social group, the positions held, and the types of relationships maintained. It has also shown the crucial role of networks' "brokers" as "gatekeepers" in the globalization of Latin American literature.

1. Introduction

Social relations across the cultural field exist within a methodological in-betweenness. While the artistic environment is shaped by actors, institutions, and relationships like any other social ecosystem, the nature of these connections, particularly the type of "value" that is produced, circulated, and received in the aesthetic space, has sparked ongoing debates about the "irreducibility" of cultural productions and the assessment of agency carried out by artists as well as editors, translators, cultural promoters, and agents. Despite Raymond Williams' pioneering work that has paved the way for new approaches to understanding relationships within the artistic world, the notion of "cultural formations" as being "too marginal, too small, or too ephemeral to require historical analysis" (Williams 1980, 149) still persists. Although recent computational methods and tools have provided innovative resources to examine the composition, function as well as the ideas and aesthetic values that these connections foster among artists and literary works, the role that these "groups" or "circles" play within the cultural system has been consistently overlooked.

On the other hand, networks within the Latin American publishing industry exhibit distinct characteristics. "Concentration", "polarization", and "fragmentation" have been described as the foundations of a "monopolistic" printing system (Escalante Gonzalbo 2007), wherein a few transnational companies (Astutti and Contreras 2001; de Diego

2006; Gallego-Cuiñas and Martínez 2017; Vanoli 2009) dominate the majority of the Spanish language book market. In contrast, numerous local, independent, and small press publishing houses struggle to overcome the constraints imposed by an unequal and asymmetrical system of book circulation (Locane 2016, 2019; Loy et al. 2018). Rooted in a colonial distribution and recognition system, the majority of Latin American writers and their works still needed to surpass national borders and reach Spain to gain visibility and “symbolic capital” during the last two decades of the twentieth century (Casanova 1999; Sapiro 2016).¹ As Ana Gallego Cuiñas has pointed out, the selection made by these large publishing houses regarding what to publish and what ultimately enters the peninsular book market as “world literature” often relies on profitability rather than ethical and aesthetic groundbreaking, giving to these literary productions a wide readership incomparable with the books published in local enterprises (Gallego Cuiñas 2014, 6).

The Shanghai network, a group of authors that emerged in Buenos Aires, Argentina, during the final decades of the twentieth century and gathered around the cultural magazine *Babel. Revista de Libros*² until the early 1990s, serves as an example of the significance of these social structures within the literary sphere of the Global South. There are clear precedents for the group throughout the 1980s, including the publication of a ‘manifesto’ in 1987, in which its signatories first referred to themselves as the Shanghai group. However, its most significant collective contribution did not crystallize until the launch of *Babel. Revista de Libros* in Buenos Aires: The magazine circulated in Buenos Aires between April 1988 and March 1991, publishing twenty-two issues. Co-directed by Martín Caparrós and Jorge Dorio, and with editors including Alan Pauls, Sergio Chejfec, Daniel Guebel, Matilde Sánchez, C.E. Feiling, Graciela Montaldo, Graciela Speranza, along with occasional contributors such as Beatriz Sarlo, Noé Jitrik, María Teresa Gramuglio, and Horacio González, the magazine reflected the age, ideological diversity, and socio-professional plurality of the medium.

Moreover, Martín Caparrós, Alan Pauls, and Sergio Chejfec were among the writers who gained international recognition, transitioning from the national to the global publishing and distribution system in the early twenty-first century. Not only did they manage to publish in some of the most widely distributed Spanish publishing houses (Planeta, Alfaguara, or Anagrama), but Caparrós and Pauls also received awards from these

1. The temporal precision is necessary as, even within the dominance of the “monopolistic system” in the regional publishing industry, it is possible to detect two distinct stages within the last forty years in the region. While publishing in transnational houses with wide distribution and internationalization was still a crucial source of legitimization and symbolic capital in the last two decades of the twentieth century (Cárcamo-Huechante et al. 2011; Lluch Prats 2009), the rise of small independent publishing houses would change this scenario in the twenty-first century. In the case of Argentina, local publishers such as Beatriz Viterbo, Adriana Hidalgo, or Paradiso, which emerged in the 1990s, would become renowned publishers by the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Since then, publishing in these houses, associated with editorial risk and the publication of transgressive aesthetics and ethics, has stood in contrast to the dynamics of commercialization, and linguistic and cultural standardization implemented by large transnational conglomerates such as Planeta, Prisa, or Penguin Random House in the Spanish book market (Gallego-Cuiñas and Martínez 2017; Saferstein and Szpilbarg 2014).

2. Initially, the magazine aimed to disseminate new publications, ambitiously presenting itself as “a magazine for all books, all authors, and all continents of reading” (Caparrós and Dorio 1988, 3). This ambition was later dismantled as sections like “Informatics”, “Sciences”, or “Children’s” gradually disappeared, leaving only narrative, cultural essays, political and social essays, poetry, and theatre. *Babel* was driven by a didactic spirit, postulating itself as a “reading guide”. In its self-promotional flyer, it stated that it is a magazine for “not reading blindly”, outlining an “ideal reader” with a high level of cultural capital. This horizon of expectations is confirmed in the visuals, as the covers of the magazine feature works by photographers such as August Sander or Diane Arbus, or stills from auteur films.

publishers. Their names appear on the list of the new ‘post-national’ trend coined by literary critics at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, other members of the group took many decades to reach – and be read – on an international stage, despite their potential significance in the recognition of their peers and vice versa.

This article will focus on how some group members achieved worldwide recognition through international prizes, plurilingual translations, and Spanish publishing houses, while the works of other participants remain limited to the Argentinian cultural system. The following pages are based on the premise that threads of sociability are fundamental in the Latin American literary system. They contribute to creating original literary forms and deliver visibility and recognition to emerging writers, both nationally and globally. Agreeing to the idea that Global South writers face specific challenges in their pursuit of internationalization (Gallego Cuiñas and Locane 2022), my study highlights how networks can be utilized to establish regional and transatlantic connections, ultimately offering alternative forms of exchange and literary appreciation in Latin America. These social structures can occasionally disrupt the hegemonic ‘appraisal’ and distribution established in the region by media conglomerates such as Planeta, Prisa-Santillana, Norma, and Bertelsmann (currently Penguin Random House) within the current Spanish imperial publishing system, as they have occurred in the past with cultural magazines in the Caribbean (González Seligmann 2021).

It proposes that these “other” forms of social organization not only serve as instruments of social capital but also provide literary recognition to their participants.³ Given that the literary circle analyzed here spans almost thirty years, the analysis invites a reevaluation of prevailing assumptions regarding the insignificance and short life cycles of literary networks. It suggests that social network analysis metrics, such as centrality, centralization, density, and clustering coefficient (Caldarelli and Cataranzo 2012; Freeman 2004; Leinhardt 2013), can unveil connections among the positions occupied within the network, sociability patterns, the reach of certain nodes’ influence, and the nature and strength of the connections.⁴ This information could be additionally analyzed in comparison to positions held within national and global literary fields as well as the recognition gained by the writers’ works.

Recent research in the field of Digital Humanities (Edelstein and Edmondson 2019; Kubis 2021; James Lee and Jason Lee 2017; Yoo 2020) has undertaken analyses on the significance of networks in cultural development. By examining the social structure of the Shanghai network over time alongside the internationalization and localization of these authors, my paper considers the nature of those links and the literary discourses they promote, aiming to move away from the dichotomy between “external” and “internal” approaches and proposing an analytical model that combines “distant” and “close” readings.

Although groundbreaking studies by So and Long (2013) and Jae-Yon (2017) have paved the way for social network analysis concerning affiliations to periodicals, cultural

3. It makes clear that these networks can have an influence on the formation of literary trends and cutting-edge ideas, as I have already studied in another work (Rodríguez-Alfonso 2024). However, the main interest of this study is the sociological impact the circle had.

4. Graph theory is the branch of mathematics that studies the properties of formal structures called “graphs”; graphs are a set of points and lines, where points are known as vertices or nodes, and lines can be called “edges” (Weisstein 2016).

magazines, and literary groups, they typically focus on the influence of these groups on the formation of individual or collective poetics or, exceptionally, on the balance of male and female participation. A notable exception is a recent paper published by Li and Corbett (2024), which delves into Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" to examine the social network built among a group of Scottish poets in the early twentieth century based on their correspondence. In this sense, my paper is affiliated with this last sociological approach together with other recent articles located in the Spanish language field. These articles not only convey the specificities of the Spanish and Latin American systems but are specially oriented towards questions in the sociology of culture, such as the spread of information, recognition, visibility, and internationalization (Ehrlicher and Herzgsell 2016; Gallego-Cuiñas et al. 2020; Lehmann and Ehrlicher 2021; Paredes 2011).

2. The Field Theory in the Local and Global Literary Fields in Latin America

2.1 Pierre Bourdieu and the Peripheric Circulation of Culture

The article employs concepts developed by Pierre Bourdieu, such as the "cultural field" and the notions of "social", "cultural", and "symbolic capital". It simultaneously examines the extent to which these theoretical frameworks can effectively analyze literary landscapes in "non-central" regions like Latin America as well as the distribution of its literature. While Bourdieu briefly touches upon writer-institution relationships (Bourdieu 1995, 318), his focus remains more on the fields than on the human actors involved.

According to Bourdieu, the *field* can be used to measure the structure and functioning of the social world, segmented according to different areas of action. What the sociologist understands as the literary field – to which he devoted articles and books throughout his career – is not simply the context in which literary works and authors are inscribed, nor merely the circuit of personal interrelationships among writers, but an authentic *field of forces* that operates on all those who enter that space. It is determined by the position they occupy in it, such as being the author of successful plays or an avant-garde poet (Bourdieu 1989, 22).

The concepts of *social capital* as well as *economic*, *cultural*, and *symbolic capital* are also taken from Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. This capital, which can also be understood as a form of power, can manifest in various forms: Economic capital (Bourdieu 1997, 108) referring to monetary or financial power; social capital – associated with the size of interpersonal relations among actors; cultural capital (Bourdieu 1997, 108) which refers to the possession of various cultural assets; and symbolic capital – linked to prestige and recognition, generally public, acquired by agents and institutions. The latter is perhaps the most difficult to define since Bourdieu described it in different ways. In *Raisons pratiques*, symbolic capital is ambiguously demarcated as the form that any type of capital acquires when it is perceived through the categories of perception (Bourdieu 1997, 108), which in the context of the literary field can be understood as the acquisition of a name that is known and recognized (Bourdieu 1995, 224).

Symbolic capital is *fabricated* in the literary field through the agency of academics, critics, editors, juries, and other actors who concur in granting value to works and their authors. Bourdieu insists that symbolic capital is explicitly constructed in opposition to economic capital, and the more independent the literary field is from other fields (economic, political, etc.), the more *autonomous* it will be. However, this formula not only ignores the participation of multiple actors and institutions from outside the literary field but also overlooks the distinctive features that characterize “peripheral” literary systems such as the Latin American one. In these systems, the interconnection among literary spaces and political and economic fields was not an obstacle since colonial times to produce original works and establish a solid literary production and circulation system (Canclini 2010).

Furthermore, Bourdieu’s field theory primarily centers around the struggle between opposing forces contending for dominance within their local spheres. However, network analysis emphasizes the importance of social structures not only in the pursuit of legitimation, but also in the circulation of ideas and aesthetics which significantly influence the individual works of writers. In this regard, digital methods challenge the limitations of Bourdieu’s field theory, offering valuable insights into the intricate structures of cultural circles on a broader scale. These methods reveal that concepts such as “autonomy” or “opposition” (Bourdieu 1995, 145) are intricately linked to social, economic, and political factors embedded within specific contexts. In this sense, concepts such as Jacques Dubois’s *literary institution* (Dubois 2019) and Itamar Even-Zohar’s *polisystems* (Even-Zohar 1979, 2005) can complement Bourdieu’s literary field theory, extending the space of literature to include interrelations with other fields and detaching it from the Eurocentric context that inspired Bourdieu’s definition of autonomy.

As previously mentioned, when the scheme of literary fields is extended to the context of global circulation and reception, we enter the so-called *world literature* studies, aimed at reconstructing the itinerary of those books and authors that reach a global distribution – or, more probably, Western – dimension through awards, translations, reviews, and publications in publishing houses outside their country of origin. While authors such as Pascale Casanova and David Damrosch have transferred concepts such as “autonomy” or struggle to the world arena, reiterating the center/periphery dichotomy based on aesthetic arguments, a recent trend involving many of the authors previously mentioned in the introduction seeks to point out the non-literary factors that determine Western consumption of other literatures located outside the Global North. Thus, the question of how world literature is made (Müller 2021) implies explaining the different mechanisms of selection and reception, the intervention of multiple agents and institutions that often compete unequally in Latin American literature to achieve such westernization or globalization.

In this sense, the change in the Latin American publishing system has played an essential role in these globalization dynamics. Here we will use the concept of the “monopolistic printing system” developed by Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo in *A la sombra de los libros: mercado, lectura y vida pública* (2007), where he distinguishes two milestones in the world publishing system: The *classical moment*, which spans the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, and the *monopolistic moment*, which he locates starting from 1959, when for the first time the shares of the Random House publishing house were listed

on the New York Stock Exchange (Escalante Gonzalbo 2007, 201). This second stage, which extends to the present day, is defined, according to Escalante, by the progressive concentration of publishing imprints in an ever-smaller group of large transnational companies, interested exclusively in the rate of profit. This represents an abrupt shift from the previous model of the quasi-family business of the bookseller-critic-publisher to the economic logic of the large consortiums. These, later transformed into multimedia groups, eventually also own newspapers, television channels, and publishing houses, crystallizing the model of standardized production typical of the cultural industry in the Adornian sense, which adds a kind of market censorship (Schiffrin 2006). This system, which undoubtedly continues to dominate, has undergone hopeful changes in the second decade of the twenty-first century with the proliferation of local and independent houses, reaching its peak in the early 1990s.

2.2 Field Theory, World Literature, and Social Network Analysis

As Gisèle Sapiro has pointed out, Bourdieu's perspectives also disregarded the close relationship between social networks and social and symbolic capitals, as well as how convenient it could be to employ Social Network Analysis (SNA) to analyze the circulation of cultural resources among individuals who belong to the same network (Sapiro 2016). Social capital functions here as a means of calculating the socio-cultural contacts among the members of the network and the variety of literary and social resources mobilized inside those organizations. Since networks are formed by an intricate system of nodes and edges, a literary network compresses a set of actors (authors, editors, critics, agents) who are linked through different forms of interrelations (cultural activities, common publications, shared polemics, to cite just a few examples). Even the correspondence among a group of literary actors can be taken as a measure of the fluctuations of social capital in the literary field, as well as of the mislaid role played by certain subjects in the cultural space at a given moment, as the aforementioned article demonstrates (Li and Corbett 2024).

Inspired by a recent paper on the effects of social capital in two social networks in Latin America (Alcaide Lozano et al. 2019), it is possible to relate what the authors call *social impact* – “the beneficial effect of change that social innovation projects generate on the target groups of those projects” – with Bourdieu's symbolic capital since both are oriented to the beneficial effects that the membership of a network can provide to its members. In this sense, the lesser or higher amount of social capital acquired from those social structures can be identified with SNA metrics such as centrality and centralization but also with eigenvector centrality, closely connected to the brokerage position in the system, showing the interrelation between the structure of the network and the members' works. What the SNA literature states, that the more heterogeneous and diverse a social ecosystem is, the greater the possibilities of gaining access to new ideas and strategies (Granovetter 1973), can be translated into the literary networks showing that those holding these brokerages tend to develop original aesthetic proposals as well as playing essential roles in providing their partners visibility, highlighting the neglected role of different agents. Furthermore, this SNA metric could be put in dialogue with what Marling (2016) has called *gatekeepers* in the printing system, which are individuals and institutions dedicated to creating the “concentric circles of nurture” through which the creativity industry flows (Granovetter 1973).

On the other hand, according to SNA theory, innovation is less likely to happen in hierarchical systems, given great visibility exclusively to the heads of the system (Newman 2018), which is something that also connects with the differences between prestige or symbolic capital and the economic capital considered by Bourdieu as the opposite. In this sense, SNA applied to literary networks can illustrate what English (2005) has named the “economy of prestige”, often embodied in literary prizes but used in a further way as the different non-literary and literary organizations and agents involved in making a book or an author “prestigious”, that is, with higher symbolic capital, simultaneously showing how the economic and literary fields are not detached, as Bourdieu suggested.

Finally, if we consider that by the 1990s, the expansion of Latin American authors to non-Latin American publishers – i.e., global publishers – marked them as “brand writers” (Lluch Prats 2009), we can interpret the publication by Spanish publishers as an expression of symbolic capital at that time. This is why, in addition to combining field theory and social network analysis, we will add a modest geospatial representation to document the acquisition of symbolic capital by some network members, as well as the correspondence between this and the structures of the network. As Alcaide Lozano et al. (2019) has pointed out, SNA metrics should be “context-sensitive”, which makes it necessary to contextualize the results obtained by SNA techniques when it comes to the Latin American publishing environment. In summary, putting SNA and the sociology of literature together, networks are seen not only as a source of social capital but also of cultural resources, which is a departure from the traditional sociological view where they are seen only as instruments, as ways to access resources and move up the social ladder. This makes even more sense when it comes to the recognition system and canonization book system at the end of the twentieth century in Latin America.

3. The Shanghai Network Structure

3.1 The Shanghai Network through SNA: Approaches and Metrics

As it has been previously demonstrated by Rodríguez-Alfonso (2022, 2024), the analysis of the Shanghai community reveals a complex system of relations among its members. These connections are considered in a broad, non-exclusively literary dimension, encompassing not only the corpus of quotations, prologues, and mentions of other members’ works, as well as their collaboration in common cultural projects (such as publications in the same magazine issue or participation in collective works), but also informal meetings among the Shanghai writers in cafeterias, newspaper offices, book fairs, and presentations. These encounters have been described in magazines from that time and can likewise be found in interviews and autobiographical memoirs. However, the significance of these connections is considered hierarchically. While the first type of connections is seen as fundamental on a discursive-material level, the social encounters are viewed as boundaries that, instead of being determinants of their literary poetics, carry weight in the critical appraisal of their works and their reception in the market. Therefore, the first type of relations, based on shared readings and quotations, are considered a more accurate evidence of literary exchange than mere meetings among friends.

The directions of these links have been taken into account. On the one hand, it is assumed that collective encounters in cafeterias, events, and publications in the same book or magazine are bidirectional relations. On the other hand, mentions, quotations, or prologues to a writer's work by other group members are considered unidirectional links, as there is no mutual 'transaction' of ideas and legitimation involved. The analysis of the Shanghai group demonstrates that some writers received a large amount of attention while others are barely mentioned. So, in more than one case there is a close relationship between centrality gained within the network and the subsequent internationalization achieved by those writers. However, there are interesting exceptions that demonstrate that other factors beyond social capital further play a role in obtaining visibility and prestige in the literary field. From a sociological perspective, factors such as the genre and the place of residence (in or out of Argentina), as well as the aesthetic features of these writers' works and the expectations surrounding their novels, are decisive too.

The number and direction of these connections reveal the importance of those who serve as sources of multiple interactions but receive only a few mentions in return. These cultural actors can be considered *brokers*, as they occupy *brokerage*⁵ positions that connect otherwise disconnected writers.⁶ I refer to these actors as "gatekeepers" (Marling 2016) since they have higher "eigenvector centrality" and "clustering coefficients", and are often the less visible members of the group in terms of global and publishing presence, while simultaneously being the main sources of symbolic capital for their partners. As will be shown, the majority of these actors embody editors, translators, and literary critics who contribute from *inside* to the dissemination and visibility of other members' works, not only nationally but also globally.

As announced, SNA metrics are used: *Density* is the ratio of existing connections to the total number of possible connections in a network, representing the degree of interconnectedness among actors. In a graph representation, it is calculated by dividing the total lines connecting nodes by the maximum number of possible lines, while a result closer to 1 indicates a more densely populated network (Scott 2000). The *clustering coefficient* in social network theory assesses how well a node connects highly connected regions without considering its importance in terms of information flow (Zhang et al. 2010, 4). *Centrality* measures the extent to which certain nodes accumulate the highest number of interactions, inspired by the concept of "star" actors in Sociometry. *Local centrality* applies when nodes are central only to their closest contacts, while *global centrality* means they are central to the entire network (Scott 2000).

PageRank and *weighted degree* have been used as measures indicating the centralization of the network. Both were calculated with Gephi (Page et al. 1999), and while the first one is an algorithm that measures the importance of nodes within a network based on the quantity and quality of connections to them, the second one shows the sum of the weights of edges connected to a node. The *eigenvector centrality*, also estimated by Gephi, measures the influence of a node in a network, determined by the centrality of its neighbors.

5. First conceived by Simmel (1950), "brokerage" describes the situation in which an actor connects otherwise disconnected actors or fills gaps or network holes in the social structure (Burt 1992). By bridging those gaps inside the network, brokers enable the connection among originally unconnected cultural agents as well as institutions.

6. The importance of distinguishing among roles within the cultural field (artists, editors, critics, etc.) has been recently pointed out in a paper by Lehmann and Ehrlicher (2021).

Considering the constraints of the Latin American publishing system, the representation of this literary network is examined in terms of geospatial dynamics. The movement of books written in Latin America to Spain, from South to North, entails a change in “symbolic status” that is also *material*. This change occurs because the arrival in the Spanish market often involves an increase in the number of printed copies and the geographical expansion of the readership through distribution and translation procedures. Consequently, the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean still signified a growth in the distribution and readership of these books, along with the acquisition of “layers” of intangible recognition, despite the recent emergence of the regional book market during the nineties. Therefore, the evolution of the Shanghai network is analyzed alongside the national and international publishing trajectories of its members.

3.2 Data Compilation and Preparation

The data analyzed in this study were collected from a corpus of cultural magazines in Argentina during the 1980s and 1990s. *Babel. Revista de Libros* (1988-1991), *Diario de Poesía. Información, creación y ensayo* (1986-2012), *Con V de Vian* (1990-1999), as well as the cultural columns from newspapers such as *El Porteño* (1982-1993) or *Página/12* (1987-present), served as the primary sources for tracing the Shanghai network during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Information about the network from the twenty-first century onward was obtained from personal interviews, memoirs, and publishers’ catalogs, demonstrating the network’s existence at least until 2010.

The process of data extraction proceeded as follows: Initially, I conducted a “distant reading” of each issue of the journals, accumulating a body of reviews, articles, interviews, and essays in which prominent authors belonged to the Shanghai group.⁷ Given that a majority of these documents were scanned magazines, I employed Adobe Acrobat Pro DC as an optical character recognition (OCR) software to convert images into searchable text. Once the text was digitized, a Python function was employed to identify all capitalized letters.⁸

The function generated an extensive roster of proper names linked with each text and author, encompassing names of individuals, geographic locations, institutions, and titles of artistic works – all of which are conventionally capitalized in the Spanish language. Subsequently, data cleaning was performed to eliminate names unrelated to human beings. Additionally, a distinction was made between individuals associated with the Argentine cultural sphere and other international authors frequently referenced by Shanghai members. While the latter group could prove valuable in studying the global literary canon established by these authors, they did not contribute to insights regarding social interactions within the local literary arena.

7. The previous identification of Shanghai’s primary members was facilitated by an existing corpus of academic and literary articles concerning the group (Castro 2009; Conde de Boeck 2022; Delgado 1996; Drucaroff 2011; Gramuglio 1990; Klein 2014; Rodríguez-Carranza 1992; Saitta 2004; Sassi 2006). As writers’ names occasionally do not align – especially in the case of less central members, whose affiliation with the circle is often debated – I have compiled a comprehensive list of all the names mentioned as potential associates of Shanghai.

8. Alternatively, it would have been possible to employ techniques from Named-Entity Recognition (NER). While its use in the Spanish language has been discussed (Miranda-Escalada et al. 2020), recent NER models have proven to be accurate enough for identifying names such as RoBERTa-base model (Höfer and Mottahedin 2023, as well as some of the models available in the Python library Hugging Face (Jain 2022).

id	source	target	type	weight	relations	year
0	Gue	Biz	Undirected	0.05	Rev	1982
1	Chit	Biz	Undirected	0.05	Rev	1983
2	Pau	Biz	Undirected	0.05	Rev	1983
3	Pau	Chit	Undirected	0.05	Rev	1983

Table 1: First four rows in the dataset from the Shanghai network (1982-1987).

This list played a key role in establishing the datasets for Shanghai’s network during the 1980s and 1990s. However, during the final stage of interactions (2002-2010), the dearth of periodic publications provoked the exploration of relations through local editorial catalogs, digital newspaper searches, and interviews. Due to the scarcity of information there, the data collection process was not automated and I manually introduced it into the dataset.

Once the initial database with the list of nodes was concluded, I constructed a relational database organized as shown in [Table 1](#).

“id” served as an enumeration for each relationship within the network. “source” indicated the author signing each text, while “target” represented the names of Argentinian writers extracted using the Python function. The “type” field classified relationships as either “directed” or “undirected”. Relations were considered “direct” when the direction of the edge went from one actor node to another (as in the case of textual quotations, mentions, comments on the work, or writing of prefaces) made by one author to another (A to B relation). “Indirect” relations refer to common forms of relations in which several actors participated simultaneously (such as participation in common events or polemics). The “relations” column described the specific nature of the connection between nodes, drawing from the type of text or textual reference found in the corpus.⁹ The “weight” attribute assigns a value to each relationship, where all the weights are normalized so that they sum to 1.0. Higher weights were assigned to inter-textual interactions like comments ($C = 2.5$) and mentions ($M = 1.5$), while social encounters ($Enc = 0.3$) and participation in the same issue of *Babel. Revista de Libros* ($B = 0.25$) held lower significance.¹⁰ Finally, the “year” column encompassed the date of the relationship or, in the case of the magazine network dataset, the issue number (1-22) in which the interactions occurred.

The fundamental dataset was formed by the “source” and “target” columns, while attributes like “relations”, “type”, “weight”, and “year” provided additional context. The research data has been divided into four tables to represent the network’s evolution

9. I manually checked each section of *Babel. Revista de Libros* where these words were found to determine the nature of the relationships (reviews, mentions, comments, etc.). For instance, when categorizing the type of text, I employed “M” to indicate “Mentions”, “Pro” to represent “Prologues”, and “Rev” for “Reviews”. I differentiated between merely mentioning another member of Shanghai (“M”) and providing a critical commentary (“C”) on their literary work. On certain occasions, the “relations” extended beyond intertextual exchanges and encompassed other forms of interaction, such as engagement in shared cultural polemics (“Pol”) or participation in public encounters (“Enc”) like book presentations or literary workshops.

10. While the justifications for the value of metrics can be traced back to both the sociology of culture and theories of intertextuality (Genette 1989; Kristeva 1997), in the case of the network around the journal, they are context-based, given that the most weighted types of relationships are located in main sections of *Babel. Revista de Libros* magazine which are consequently the most prestigious. Even though the choice ultimately relies on the critical judgment of the types of relationships, differentiating my analysis from a exclusively computational approach.

over the years¹¹, accounting for fluctuations in the number of members and metrics such as density, centrality, clustering coefficient, and centralization specific to each period. As the primary focus was on investigating diachronic changes within the network, the tables indicating the years of exchanges offer a comprehensive view of how the metric changes are intertwined with literary and sociological developments in the Shanghai circle over time.

Furthermore, an extra table dedicated to publishing houses has been generated to illuminate the writers' global circulation. This table provides insights into the categorization of publishing houses – whether small, medium, or large – based on their location and scope. Maps accompany this information to illustrate the countries in which these publishing houses are situated.

4. Evolving Structure and Writers' Symbolical and Social Capital through SNA Metrics

The following pages provide an in-depth analysis of each chapter within Shanghai's journey. The division into the four mentioned periods was influenced not only by the evolving structure of the network, which underwent multiple changes throughout the examined timeframe (1982-2010), but also by both the writers' social status and the critical reception of their works during each phase.

The studied network undergoes four distinct periods. The initial period, spanning from 1982 to 1987, reflects an early phase characterized by a limited number of nodes and sparse connections between them. According to the devised "weight" scale, these connections hold modest "value", primarily because they are social interactions rather than literary ones.

Transitioning to the network's second stage (1988-1991), a clear distinction emerges between the extensive network cultivated within the pages of *Babel. Revista de Libros* and the network established beyond it within the national literary sphere. Metrics such as density, weighted degree, and clustering coefficient exhibit a marked contrast since the magazine network demonstrates higher values in terms of density and the degree of weighted links. Furthermore, the division between the structure of the network in *Babel. Revista de Libros* and the system developed outside the magazine is due to the number of participants and the type of relationships among them. At that time, on the one hand, the network outside *Babel* is considerably smaller, and the relations are essentially affiliated with social activities instead of literary ones. On the other hand, the diversity of collaborators served to incorporate a set of other actors who will not be part of the dense but limited network outside the magazine. This period marks the peak of the network's evolution as the journal serves as a pivotal arena for its expansion,

11. Initially, the fundamental reason for many of these divisions was the history of the group: The first division, for example, covers the initial period between the group's early beginnings and the emergence of the magazine. The second division, therefore, covers the years of the magazine's existence. The third division covers the period between the closure of the journal and the first publication of a member of the group in an international transnational publishing house. I played with different stages when analyzing the data, but ultimately there was a clear coincidence between the quantitative shifts and the historical division, so that I kept the initial time partition.

Metrics	1982-1987	1988-1991		1992-2002	2003-2010
		Cultural Field	<i>Babel</i>		
Avg Degree	2.667	1.533	0.923	5.933	1.333
Avg Weighted Degree	0.341	0.111	17.023	1.257	0.654
Graph Density	0.092	0.053	0.461	0.205	0.046
Avg Clustering Coef.	0.944	0.133	0.776	0.632	0.888

Table 2: General metrics of the Shanghai network along the years (1982-2010).

nurturing continual exchanges and fostering inter-literary relationships encompassing reviews, essays, articles, and mentions among or about network members.

As [Table 2](#) illustrates, the third stage reveals a decline in author interactions. Nevertheless, various types of relationships persisted throughout the 1990s, and metrics related to density and the average number of links remain the second highest in the group's entire existence. Despite some former members migrating to other social spheres and others assuming more peripheral positions within Shanghai, a notable number of links endure among the most central authors, as evidenced by the graph's high density.

In the final phase, a radical decay in interactions among the original network nodes is observed. Nonetheless, it is intriguing to recognize that the few remaining nodes maintain robust connections with their counterparts, a trend reflected in the clustering coefficient. This phenomenon is noticeable in both the initial and final stages, where the network tends to be less dense, less expansive, and more limited. However, the few members exhibit a heightened propensity to form cohesive clusters among themselves.

4.1 The Beginnings of the Association and the Local Book Market (1982-1987)

The first stage encompasses the early activities of the group (1982-1987), during which it cannot be accurately classified as a "network" due to the absence of a corpus of "aesthetic exchange". This "aesthetic exchange" refers to the collection of fictional novels that would only be published starting from 1990 and the subsequent reviews they would inspire among the group members. The structure of the community during this period reflects a "formation period" characterized by a scarcity of literary works to discuss, as the majority of the group members were still unpublished at that time.

In [Figure 1](#)¹², we can observe the early Shanghai circle with only a few participants involved. The color palette of the nodes provided by Gephi, ranging from green to purple, illustrates the PageRank of every node. Some actors, like Daniel Guebel, Alan Pauls, Luis Chitarroni, and Sergio Chejfec, share dense relations and participate in the same events. The position of Jorge Dorio indicates a non-central position, as he is only connected to the group through Martín Caparrós. The presence of writer Matilde Sánchez is noteworthy, as she occupies a central position in the visualization despite having weak links with the other members. In the metrics, Sanchez only occupies an intermediate position (the fourth one, ordered from highest to lowest) in terms of its "eigenvector centrality", while it occupies the penultimate position in the remaining metrics (such as PageRank and degree). This can be attributed to her being mentioned

12. The table and full metrics corresponding to this figure can be found on <https://github.com/ARodAlfonso/Mapping-Cultural-Networks-in-the-Global-South-Book-Market/blob/main/1982-1987.csv>.

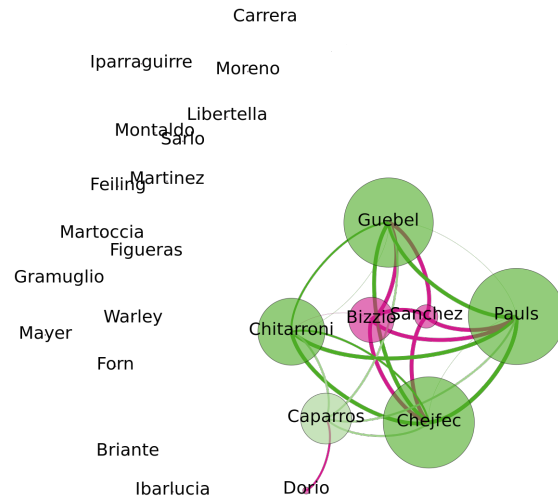


Figure 1: Structure of the Shanghai network (1982-1987). Participation in the same magazines (dark green), cultural activities (light green) as well as group reviews (rosa) are considered.

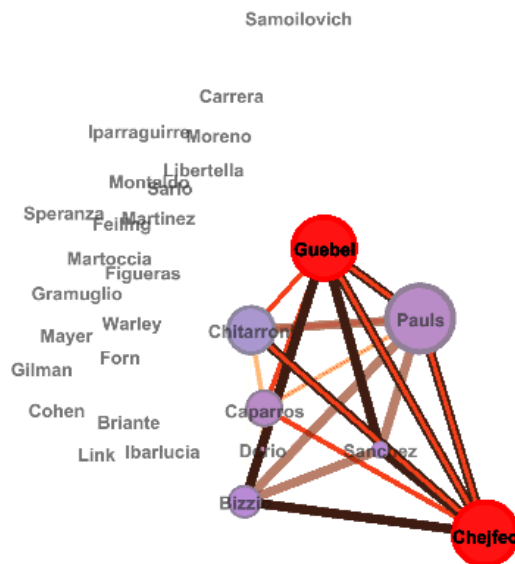


Figure 2: Shortest path between Guebel and Chejfec.

as part of the group, even though she does not actively participate in the main Shanghai group activities. This discrepancy highlights the divergence between the “narrative” surrounding the group as portrayed by national critics and the actual reality of the relationships among the writers.

These initial distinctions regarding the network’s center and periphery can be further examined in [Figure 2](#). The shortest path, which involves finding the minimum distance from a starting point (here a node) to a destination point (a second node) between two well-connected members, Daniel Guebel and Sergio Chejfec, excludes the nodes representing Sánchez and Dorio. While the other writers appear to be densely interconnected, there is no direct path through Sánchez or Dorio, as they seem to be somewhat ‘detached’ from the Shanghai network.

4.2 Network Consolidation in *Babel Magazine* (1988-1991)

The time frame from 1988 to 1991 covers the most prolific period of the Shanghai group. The foundation of *Babel. Revista de Libros* and the publication of their opera prima made room for an enlargement of the writers’ sociability system, as well as for a genuine ideo-aesthetic exchange.

[Figure 3](#)¹³ provides a picture of the expansion and density acquired by the network by March 1991 when the last issue of *Babel. Revista de Libros* was launched. By this time, the number of members had tripled, and the types of relations among them had increased and diversified. The colors of the edges indicate the kinds of links that exist between the nodes, while the nodes’ green degree and size serve as indicators of the writers’ centrality. Centrality has been calculated using the PageRank concept provided by Gephi, relying simultaneously on the assigned weight of the edges and the directions of the links denoted by arrows.

The graph reveals the existence of two well-defined clusters inside the social system: On the one side, there is a large “semi-group” of dispersed participants who are mostly associated by writing in the same magazine issue – pointed out with rose edges –, and on the other side, there is a second cluster consisting of a small group of people densely entwined by other types of relationships, as [Figure 4](#) shows in detail.

As illustrated, the Argentinian writer and journalist Martín Caparrós held the most central position in the magazine at that time, followed by the authors Alan Pauls and Sergio Chejfec. While Dorio and Caparrós served as the editorial directors of *Babel. Revista de Libros*, Caparrós’ centrality cannot be solely explained by his position in the magazine. His extensive interactions within and outside the network contrast with the limited interactions maintained by Dorio across it. Caparrós, along with Pauls and Chejfec, garnered the majority of mentions, reviews, prologues, and shared polemics, which not only led to the centralization of their network but also increased the visibility of their literary works. Knowing that he was one of the more quoted writers at that time, one can consider that the fact that people discussed them and their novels extensively contributed to a “resonating box” effect in terms of the diffusion waves writers such as Caparrós and other relatively unknown authors gained within the network and the

13. The table and full metrics corresponding to [Figure 3](#) can be found on <https://github.com/ARodAlfonso/Mapping-Cultural-Networks-in-the-Global-South-Book-Market/blob/main/1988-1991BABEL.csv>.

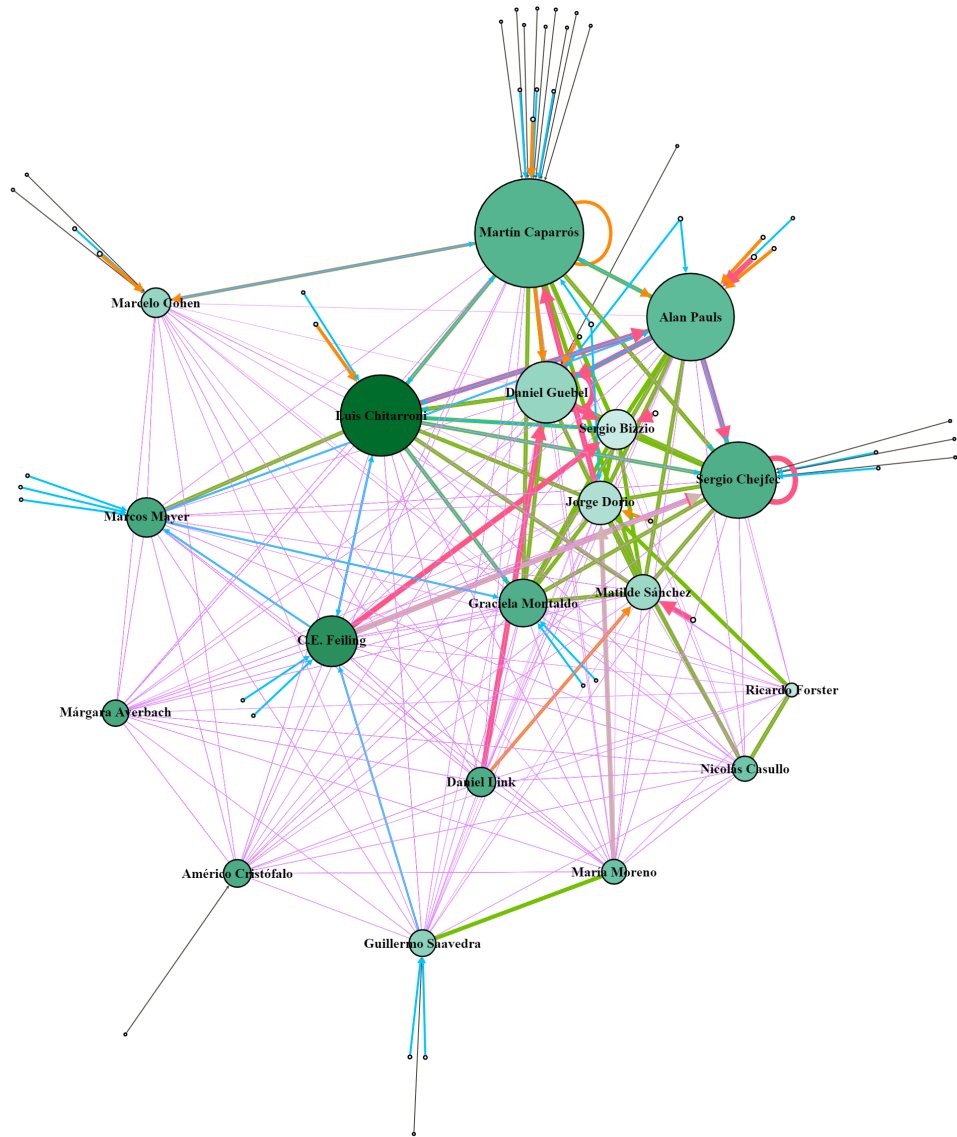


Figure 3: Density and expansion of the Shanghai network (1988-1991). The types of links such as publication in the same issue (rosa), common activities (green), mentions (blue), promotions (brown), comments (orange), reviews (fucsia), polemics (cyan), and prologues (beige) were taken into account.

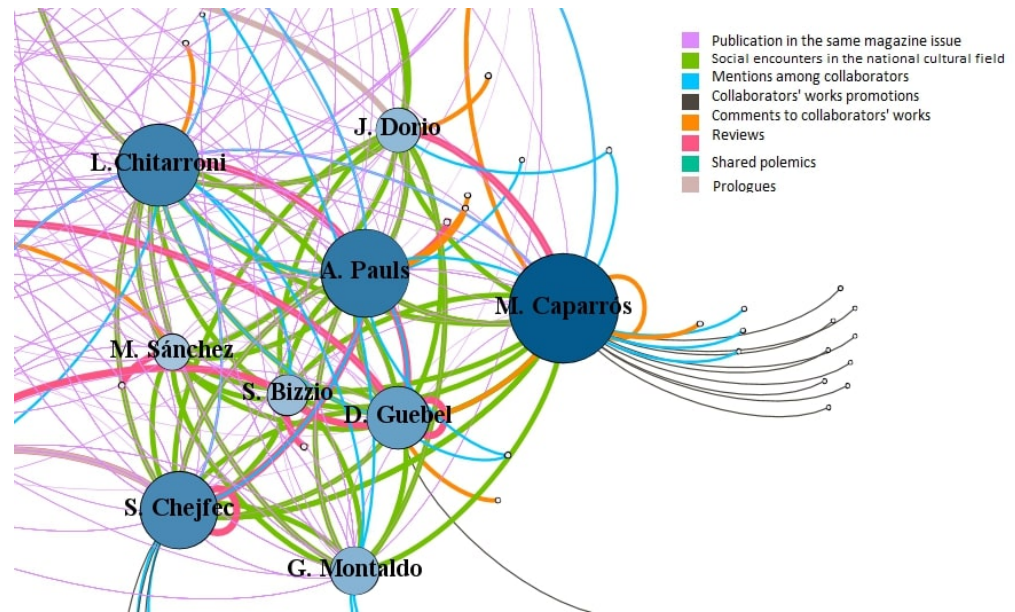


Figure 4: Detail of the semi-cluster in the Shanghai network (1988-1991).

local literary field that surrounded it.

Another interesting aspect of the network during this period emerges when we focus on another participant from the smaller cluster: the writer and editor Luis Chitarroni. Both Figure 3 and Figure 4 depict him holding a high PageRank despite not being in the center of the network. This suggests a distinction between “influence” and “visibility” since Chitarroni accumulated a significant number of interactions in the network despite not being one of its most central figures. It can be said that he contributed more than he received, as indicated by the arrows in Figure 3. In other words, the Argentinian editor actively participated by mentioning, reviewing, and writing prologues about the works of his peers while receiving only occasional attention from them. This finding is not reflected in the previous literature of the group, where until now Chitarroni has been considered a member of lesser importance for the establishment and the maintenance of the circle.

In fact, it is worth comparing the social structure of the magazine with the network outside *Babel. Revista de Libros* during that time, where Chitarroni’s PageRank is even the next highest after Caparros, as shown in Figure 5 and Table 3.¹⁴

In addition to the social relations fostered by the magazine, we can observe that the network in the Argentinian literary field is primarily based on the densest cluster within *Babel*. By disregarding the directions of the edges, the role of Chitarroni as a mediator becomes even more evident in this context. In fact, if we revisit the network formed by the magazine and delve deeper, we discover that Chitarroni possesses the highest eigenvector centrality.

Table 4 provides a contrasting view of the network’s structure by revealing which members consistently engage in mediating interactions among the most influential actors, a pattern that results from the frequency of their collaborations within *Babel*. This

14. The Table 3 and the full metrics corresponding to Figure 5 can be found on <https://github.com/ARodAlfonso/Mapping-Cultural-Networks-in-the-Global-South-Book-Market/blob/main/1988-1991.csv>.

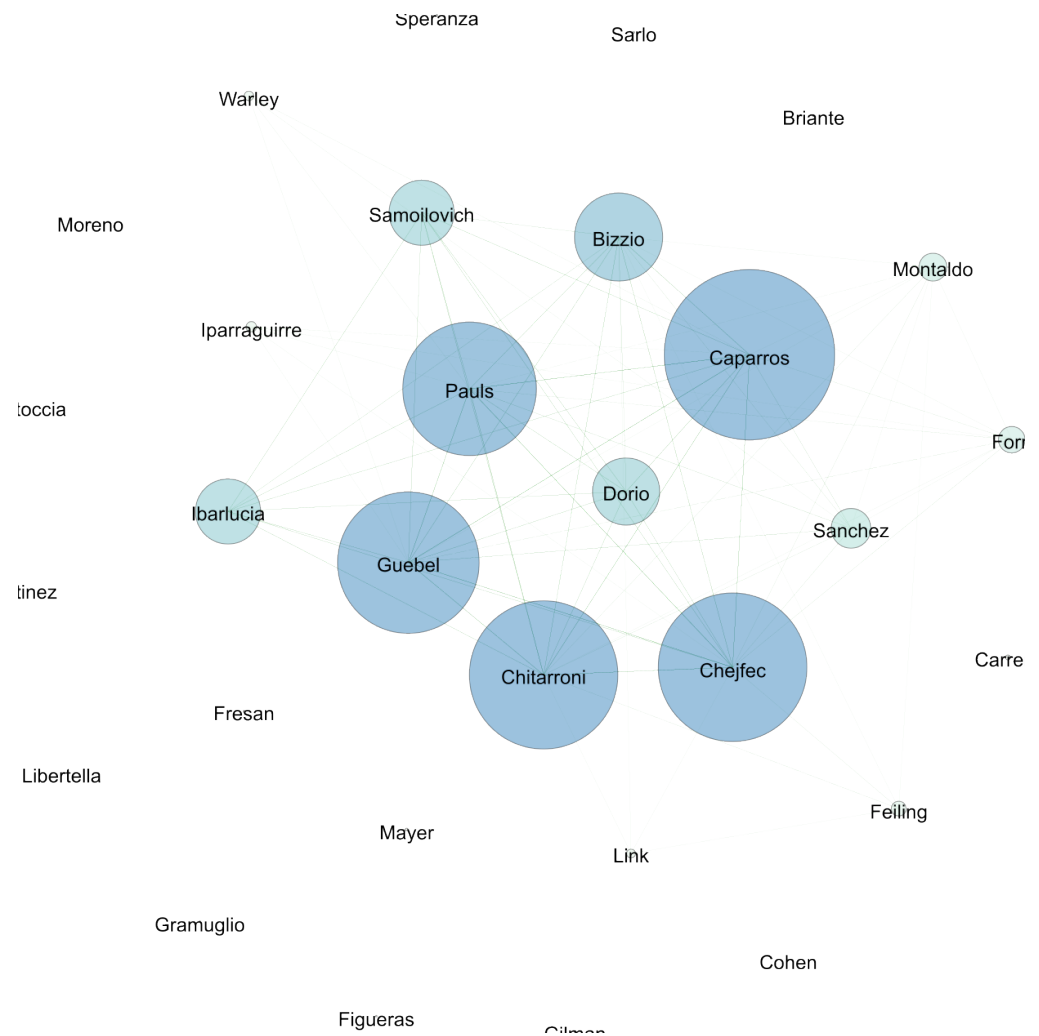


Figure 5: Chitarroni’s “PageRank” (1988-1991): The graph is focused on the node sizes based on PageRank metrics.

Nodes	PageRank
Martín Caparrós	0.1027
Luis Chitarroni	0.1024
Sergio Chejfec	0.1004
Daniel Guebel	0.0981
Alan Pauls	0.0951
Sergio Bizzio	0.0705
Jorge Dorio	0.0568
Ricardo Ibarlucía	0.0554
Daniel Samoilovich	0.0554
Matilde Sánchez	0.0372

Table 3: The nodes’ “PageRanks” (1988-1991).

Nodes	Eigenvector centrality
Luis Chitarroni	1.0
C.E. Feiling	0.8584
Márgara Averbach	0.7228
Américo Cristófalo	0.6999
Marcos Mayer	0.6996
Daniel Link	0.6684
Graciela Montaldo	0.6326
Sergio Chejfec	0.6106
Alan Pauls	0.5374
María Moreno	0.5195
Martín Caparrós	0.5176

Table 4: The nodes' "Eigenvector Centrality" (1988-1991).

finding highlights mediation and centralization as contrasting roles, with the exception of Chitarroni, who, despite not being among the most visible nodes, holds a position within the central cluster. Chitarroni occupies a medial position between the two subgroups, granting him access to two different sources of ideas and literary aesthetics, thus diversifying his social capital. Furthermore, his role as a mediator extends beyond the magazine, particularly considering his work as an editor at *Sudamericana*, a local publishing house where Caparrós published his novel *La noche anterior* in 1990. In the following pages, we will delve into the significance of the role played by actors like Chitarroni in the diffusion and recognition of their peers in the years to come.

4.3 Shanghai's Expansion and Local Publishing Circulation (1992-2002): Social Capital, Publicity, and Prestige

During the 1990s, the Argentinian cultural field witnessed the increasing recognition of several writers from the Shanghai network, alongside their collective endeavors. After the closure of *Babel. Revista de Libros*, the magazine's staff members transitioned to other local magazines and newspapers, such as *El Porteño*, *Diario de Poesía*, *Página/12*, *Clarín*, and *V de Vian*. In these new stages, they continued to write about their peers' books.

The period saw the release of new novels by authors like Caparrós, Pauls, Chejfec, and Guebel, while Chitarroni, Sánchez, and Feiling published their first fictional works. Alongside the previously identified types of relations, new modes of interaction emerged. These included dual publications, appearances in the same anthology, and collective works in the form of "exquisite corpse" collaborations. Furthermore, national critics began identifying these writers as part of a distinct "literary generation", further solidifying their collective identity and endurance as a network throughout the decade.

The continued collaboration and support among the Shanghai network members, along with the recognition they received in the literary field, exemplify their enduring presence and influence. Despite the closure of the magazine, their collective undertakings and individual successes contributed to the cultural landscape of the time, showcasing the lasting impact of the network.

Figure 6 depicts the major shifts in the network's structure during this time.¹⁵ The

15. The table and full metrics corresponding to this figure can be found on <https://github.com/ARodAlfonso/Mapping-Cultural-Networks-in-the-Global-South-Book-Market/blob/main/1992-2002.csv>.

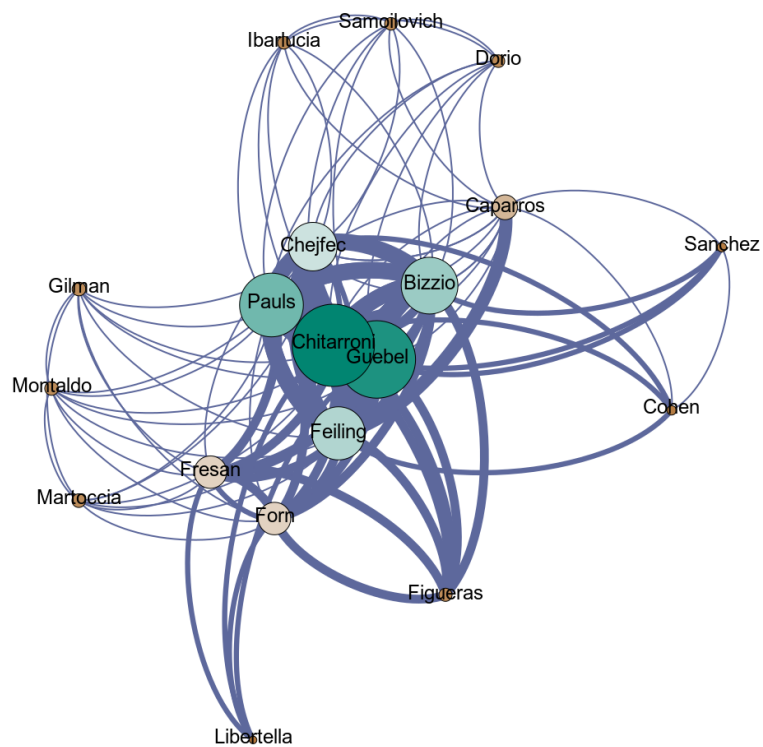


Figure 6: Major shifts in the Shanghai network’s structure (1992-2002): The node color and size ranging from green to brown are based on their PageRank, and the violet-painted edges indicate the edges’ weight, from thinner to thicker lines, according to the most highly rated links, evaluated in the following order of relevance: group reviews, shared activities, interviews, anthologies, and collective works.

node colors, ranging from green to brown, represent their centrality degree, while the violet-painted edges indicate the weight assigned to every kind of relationship. On the one hand, a notable change is observed in the center of the network, where Chitarroni and Guebel now centralize the system, surrounded by Chejfec (whose centrality has considerably decreased), Pauls, Bizzio, and a newly central Feiling. On the other hand, Caparrós, although still connected to members of the small cluster, occupies a peripheral position. The few women connected to the group, such as Graciela Montaldo, María Martoccia, Claudia Gilman, and Sánchez, are located at the extremes of the network, belonging to the network but being in its periphery. It is worth mentioning that Montaldo, Martoccia, and Gilman are included in the network based on Chitarroni's designation as representatives of new trends in Argentinian literature, alongside the Shanghai group.

The composition of network participants has changed as they reduced interactions with other collaborators in *Babel* (Rodríguez-Alfonso 2024). Writers from other sociability systems that coexisted in the national sphere at this time, such as Juan Forn and Rodrigo Fresán, are now part of the margins of the Shanghai group. This can be interpreted as an expansion of the network into other social grids, as well as a change in the type of relationships. The dense links of the small circle have been replaced by a larger system where associations are weaker because part of the grid now belongs to other social networks. Caparrós, for example, began publishing in mainstream newspapers in the 1990s, covering topics such as politics and cinema, which connected him to other social groups. Similarly, Pauls started publishing in newspapers with a larger audience, which can explain his slight distance from the center. Additionally, Chejfec's distance from the epicenter can be attributed to his move to Venezuela in 1990 and his engagement with new cultural circles in that country.

When examining the publishing market and the magazines/journals of that time, it becomes apparent that some writers who were slightly distanced from the network's center were among the most "visible" during the period. This visibility was not only related to their active participation in the public sphere (through television programs, magazines, and cultural newspapers), since these writers often pursued other professions, such as journalism, scriptwriting, or television presenting, but also because some of them started to publish in larger publishing houses, such as Planeta or Alfaguara, which, although they still had a local distribution, possessed greater symbolic capital (associated with their prestige), as well as economic and social capital (linked to the printing of a larger number of copies or the presentation by prominent players in the cultural field, among other factors). Table 5 provides a list of the main writers from the Shanghai group organized by their publishing houses grouped by colors, with green representing local and small editorial houses, blue indicating medium-sized publishers, and red indicating big publishers. Figure 7 illustrates the geographical distribution of these publishing companies during the period. The map is not only related to the localization of the publishing houses but also to the symbolical movement implied (from a local distribution and recognition to an international one) as well as a physical one (due to frequent travels by the Argentine authors for book presentations and other forms of 'book tours').

This finding contrasts with the previous period, where Pauls and Caparrós, the more central writers in the network, were additionally the most visible ones, which prompts

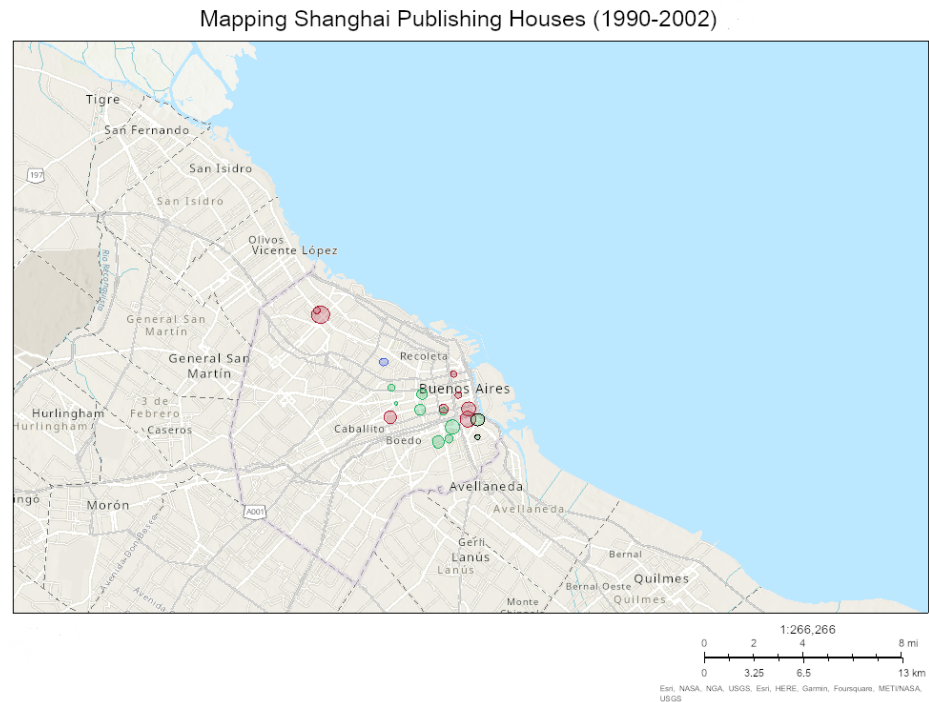


Figure 7: Local publishing houses from Shanghai writers in Buenos Aires (1990-2002): Local and small editorial houses (green), medium-sized publishers (blue), and big publishers (red) are represented.

reflection on the relationship between the network's distribution and the status held by writers in the cultural field. It suggests that there might be a connection with belonging to a dense and small network during the early stages of a literary career. However, expanding into other circles of sociability and establishing weak ties in each of these networks appear to be an advantage once initial local recognition and prestige have been attained.

Indeed, there is a notable distinction between Caparrós and Chejfec/Pauls in terms of their relationships with former partners and its influence on their publishing and critical responses. It is not coincidental that the local publishing houses where Pauls and Chejfec published during the 1990s often published other members of the dense clusters, such as Marcelo Cohen, C.E. Feiling, or Chitarroni himself. This could indicate a connection between the visibility acquired in the cultural field and the position held in the network, as well as a link between the type of visibility and the type of recognition received. In other words, the majority of the writers who were still part of the dense cluster by this time published in local and independent publishers, while those who distanced themselves from the cluster started to publish in international publishing groups.

Historiographically speaking, Caparrós' works primarily gained recognition from journalists and newspapers, while the novels and essays of Pauls and Chejfec were acclaimed or at least noticed by academics, editors, and literary critics. This highlights a new distinction in the critical reception of these authors, emphasizing the differences between

Authors	1990	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
A. Pauls	Emecé			Alfaguara	Espasa-Calpe	El Ateneo
M. Caparrós	Sud	Planeta		Planeta		
S. Chejfec	Puntosur	Alfaguara				
L.Chitarroni		Juan Genovese				
D. Guebel	Emecé	Sud & Beatriz V		Emecé & Beatriz V	FCE	
S. Bizzio	Catálogos	Sud	FCE	Beatriz V	Sud	
M. Sánchez	Ada Korn		Planeta			
M. Cohen		Anaya & M. Muchnik		Paradiso	Anaya & M. Muchnik	Minotauro
M. Moreno				Planeta		
C.E. Feiling		Sud	Sud		Sud	Planeta

Table 5: Publishing houses itineraries from Shanghai writers (1990-2002). Green represents local and small editorial houses, blue indicates medium-sized publishers, and red indicates big publishers.

Authors	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
A. Pauls						
M. Caparrós		De la Flor	Norma			
S. Chejfec		Simurg	Alfaguara			
L.Chitarroni	Tusquets					
D. Guebel		Sud	Norma	Emecé		
S. Bizzio		Sud				
M. Sánchez	Celeste		Seix Barral			
M. Cohen					Ambrosía	
M. Moreno		Norma				Sud
C.E. Feiling						

Table 5: Publishing houses itineraries from Shanghai writers (1990-2002), continued.

the “social capital” held by Caparrós and the still modest “symbolic capital” already possessed by Pauls and Chejfec at that time, as the structure of the network suggests.

Setting up a dialogue between both types of diffusion and recognition received by these authors, those can be connected to their respective positions within the network and their connections to specific clusters. On the one hand, Caparrós, with his ties primarily to journalists and newspapers, gained social capital through broader public visibility and recognition. On the other hand, Pauls and Chejfec, with their closer relationships to other network members and connections to specific publishing houses, garnered attention and acclaim from more specialized audiences, including academics, editors, and literary critics. This distinction reflects the different types of capital and recognition that these authors were able to acquire within the cultural field during that period.

Furthermore, the case of C.E. Feiling exemplifies the complex relationship between social capital, publicity, and prestige when it comes to author recognition. Figure 8, which organizes nodes based on their PageRank, demonstrates that Guebel and Chitarroni’s nodes overlap in Gephi because their distance in terms of metrics is so small, in part due to their joint projects. Pauls, Bizzio, and Chejfec closely follow them in proximity. However, C.E. Feiling, positioned as the sixth writer on the PageRank line, holds one of the most advantageous positions when it comes to eigenvector centrality, ranking third from highest to lowest. He remains authentically well connected to the central cluster, as depicted in Figure 9, while the looseness of ties with its members suggests his simultaneous involvement in various other networks. This can be seen through his collaborations in local magazines such as *El Porteño*, *Diario de Poesía*, *Página/30*, *Conjetural*, as well as his work as an editor and translator in publishing houses like El Ateneo. In this sense, C.E. Feiling’s position in the network is a novelty compared to the previous

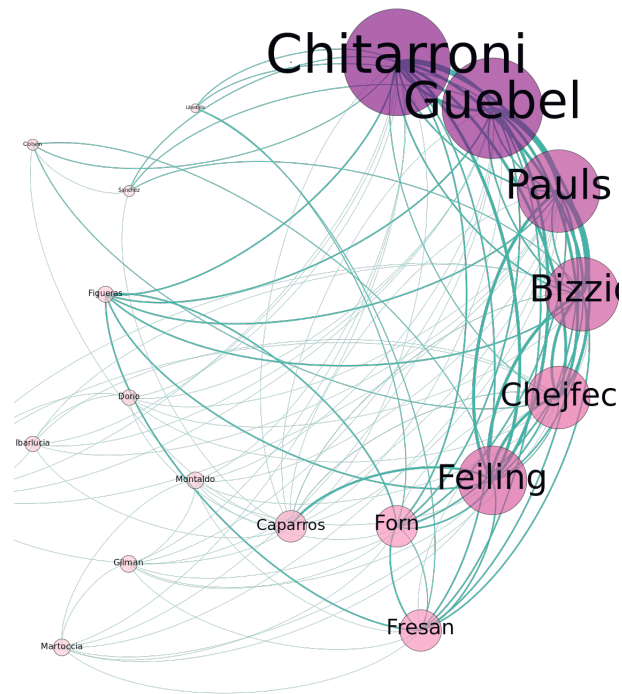


Figure 8: Nodes Organization by "PageRank" in Shanghai network (1992-2002).

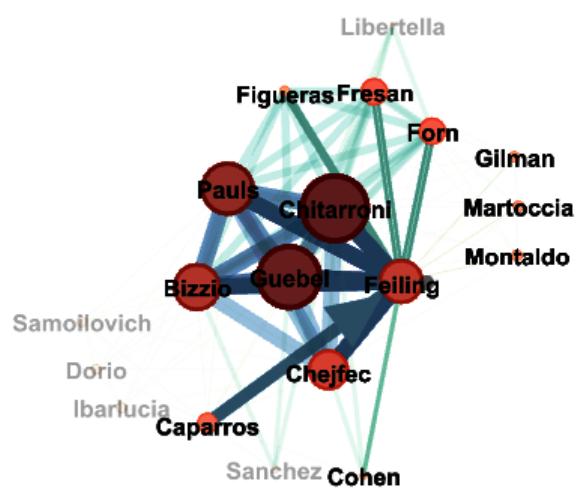


Figure 9: Feiling's Position in the Central Cluster (1992-2002).

literature of the group. Being usually considered a “minor” figure in the network, his actual position as revealed by the graph has been barely mentioned, overlooking the key member he was in the history of the group.

It is worth noting that Feiling’s career path stood out as the most promising in terms of prestige and diffusion within the network. He became the first member of the cluster to be nominated for the renowned literary prize, the Planeta Award (Premio Planeta), in 1995. Unfortunately, his career was tragically cut short by his premature death in 1997. Feiling’s trajectory showcases the interplay between social capital, publicity, and prestige. His strong connections within the central cluster and simultaneous engagement in other networks allowed him to navigate diverse literary spaces and expand his recognition, something that the network analysis has revealed.

4.4 New Forms of Shanghai’s Association and the (G)local Circulation (2003-2010)

The death of C.E. Feiling prompted new forms of association within the authors of the dense cluster, leading to homages, collective works, and self-reflective memoirs. In network analysis terms, we can say that Feiling transitions from being a node to becoming an edge, serving as a form of relation within the writers’ system.

The first decade of the twenty-first century proved decisive for the globalization of Shanghai writers. Caparrós, Pauls, and Chejfec embodied different aspects of the internationalization undertaken by a portion of contemporary Latin American authors across the region (Castany Prado 2007; Noguerol 2020; Noguerol 2008). In 2004, Caparrós received the Planeta Award, one of the most popular literary prizes in Spanish literature. A year prior, Pauls had won the Herralde Award, an esteemed annual prize presented by the Catalan publishing house Anagrama, which held great significance in the Spanish-language narrative field during that time. In a different direction, Sergio Chejfec published his novel *Mis dos mundos* with the Catalan independent publishing house Candaya, known for its interest in groundbreaking literary works.

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, writers such as Chitarroni, Sánchez, Guebel, Bizzio, and Cohen remained active in the local arena, engaging in a reverse process that can be described as “localization”. They began publishing with even more “independent” and “local” small publishing houses like Beatriz Viterbo, Eterna Cadencia, Mansalva, and interZona.

The provided Table 6 showcases the publishing houses associated with each author during the period from 2003 to 2010. Anagrama and Random House were among the publishing houses for Alan Pauls, while Caparrós had works published by Planeta, Booket, Seix Barral, and Anagrama. S. Chejfec had his publications with Alfaguara, Norma, and Candaya, while Chitarroni had a connection with interZona and La Bestia Equilátera. Daniel Guebel published with Emecé, C. de Troya, and Beatriz Viterbo, while S. Bizzio had works with Beatriz Viterbo, Eterna Cadencia, Mansalva, and Mondadori. M. Sánchez had publications with Icaria, Alfaguara, and Mondadori. Cohen’s works were associated with Ambrosía, and María Moreno published with Sudamericana (abbreviated to “Sud” in Table 6).

Authors	2003	2004	2005	2006
A. Pauls	Anagrama			Anagrama & Random House
M. Caparrós		Planeta	Booket	Seix Barral
S. Chefec		Alfaguara	Norma	
L.Chitarroni				
D. Guebel		Emecé & C. de Troya		Beatriz V
S. Bizzio				Beatriz V
M. Sánchez	Icaria			
M. Cohen	Pág. de Espuma & Norma			Norma
M. Moreno			Sud	
C.E. Feiling				Norma

Table 6: Publishing house itineraries from Shanghai writers (2003-2010).

Authors	2007	2008	2009	2010
A. Pauls	Anagrama			Anagrama
M. Caparrós	Anagrama			Anagrama
S. Chefec	Alfaguara	Candaya	Candaya	
L.Chitarroni	interZona	La Bestia Equilátera		
D. Guebel				
S. Bizzio		Eterna Cadencia	Mansalva & Eterna Cadencia	Mondadori
M. Sánchez	Alfaguara			Mondadori
M. Cohen	Norma		Alfaguara	
M. Moreno	Sud			
C.E. Feiling	Norma		Alfaguara	

Table 6: Publishing houses itineraries from Shanghai writers (2003-2010), continued.

These publishing connections demonstrate the evolving trajectories and localized shifts within the Shanghai group during this period, reflecting their diverse experiences in terms of recognition and circulation in both global and local contexts.

The last analyzed stage of the writers' network demonstrates a significant decrease in its scope and number of participants. The distribution of the nodes is a consequence of the main type of relations during this period, which can be characterized as bidirectional connections such as joint publications in shared anthologies and monographs considered in this period as forms of relationships. Here the edge weight represents the similarity between the node degrees, where a higher similarity means a smaller edge length, which can be appreciated through the metrics since the difference in terms of PageRank and weighted degree is very small among the first four authors (Guebel, Chefec, Chitarroni, and Pauls).

Furthermore, there was a "boom" of collective books published by local publishing houses in Argentina during this time, and it is common to find more than two or three members of the previous Shanghai group contributing to these anthologies. Daniel Guebel appears as the most recurrent name in these compilations, actively promoting group identifications. He, along with Sergio Bizzio, authored a collective work that pays tribute to C.E. Feiling titled *El día feliz de Charlie Feiling*. Additionally, Guebel participated in a documentary about Alan Pauls' works titled *Alan Pauls. Conversaciones con Daniel Guebel*.

These collective projects and collaborations further highlight the ongoing connections and sense of community among the writers from the Shanghai group, even as the network's size diminishes. It underscores their continued engagement and mutual

Madrid (2002-2010)

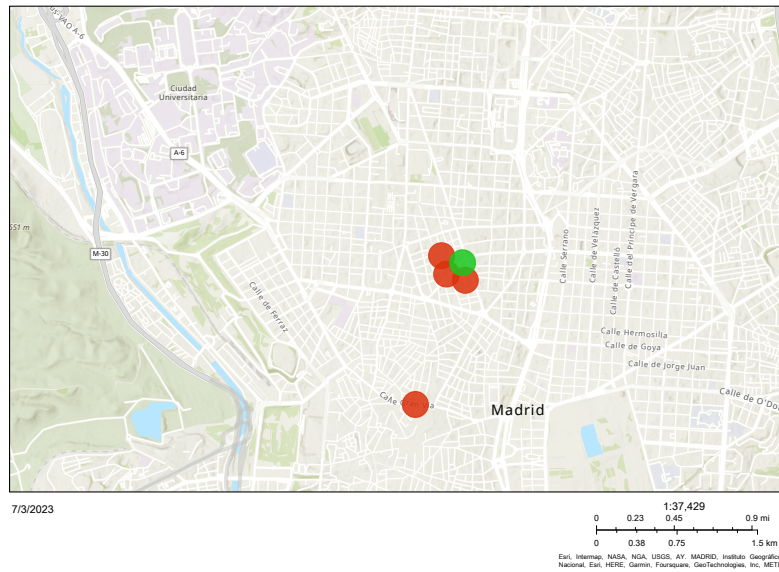


Figure 10: Local and international publishing houses from Shanghai writers in Madrid (2002-2010). The meaning of the colors (green, red, and blue) coincide with the ones in [Table 5](#) and [Table 6](#).

Barcelona (2002-2010)

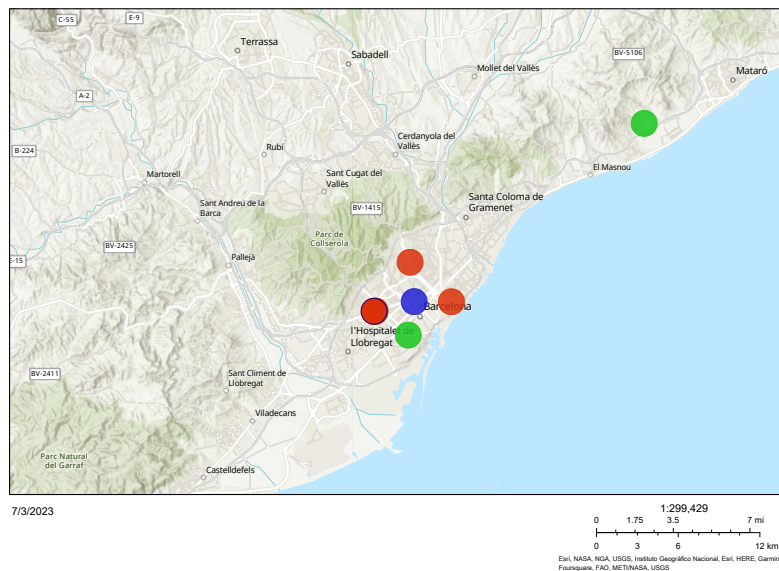


Figure 11: Local and international publishing houses from Shanghai writers in Barcelona (2002-2010). The meaning of the colors (green, red, and blue) coincide with the ones in [Table 5](#) and [Table 6](#).

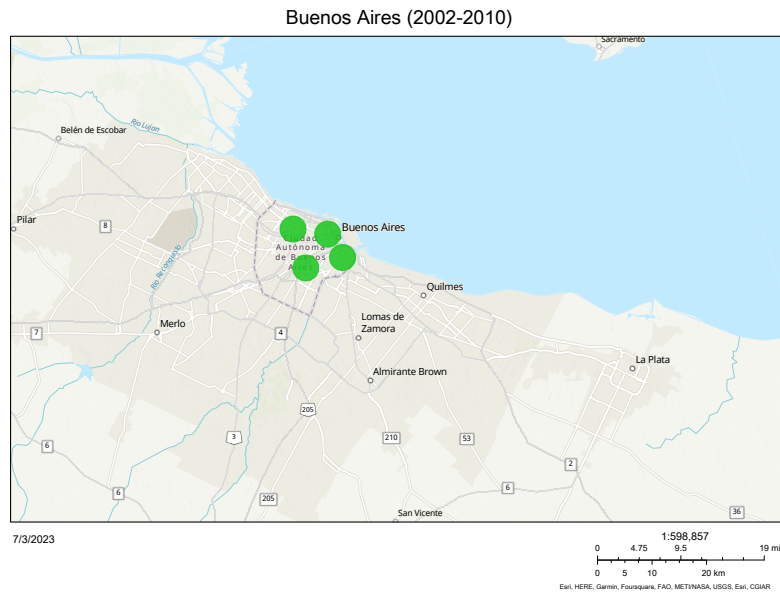


Figure 12: Local and international publishing houses from Shanghai writers in Buenos Aires (2002-2010). The meaning of the colors (green, red, and blue) coincide with the ones in [Table 5](#) and [Table 6](#).

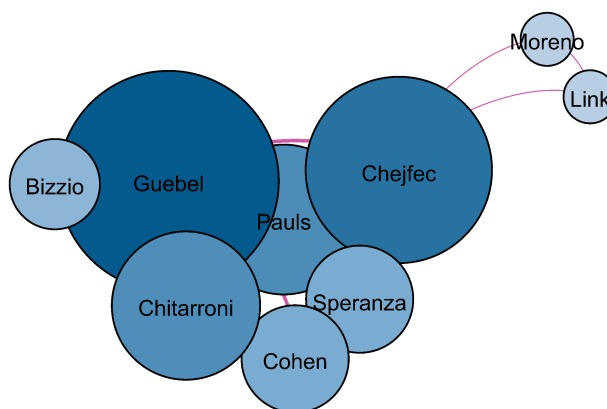


Figure 13: Shanghai network's structure (2003-2010). The node size and blue degree indicate the members' PageRank.

support, as well as their commitment to honoring their shared history and the memory of their fellow writers.

Pauls' position within the group is indeed interesting, as he once again centralizes the network in the final period, despite not being among the most involved in group activities.¹⁶ While Chitarroni continues to play a significant "gatekeeping" role within the group, Pauls acts as a mediator between the network and external circles due to his worldwide recognition. As a result, he remains connected to everyone in the group without being tied to any particular member. This "in-between" position can explain his central role without his active participation in group events.

Unlike Chefec, Pauls still resides in Argentina during the first decade of the twenty-first century, making him more readily available for group events where he may choose to participate. Furthermore, Pauls' acquired symbolic capital is not insignificant, as he can potentially open doors for his former partners. However, Pauls' position can be seen as an example of the benefits of being "in-between". He absorbs ideas, social capital, and new literary trends from different cultural contexts, both locally and globally (Rodríguez-Alfonso 2024). This allows him to navigate multiple grids and enrich his own work, as his literary work has proven.

In summary, Shanghai's itinerary demonstrates a clear correlation between an author's position in the network and their level of internationalization. Those who occupied central positions in the network during the initial stages are the ones who eventually achieved international recognition and published their works in major global publishing houses. On the contrary, the authors who were initially located on the periphery of the social circle had a limited impact, often publishing locally or within national publishing houses.

Furthermore, writers who remain within the local publishing sphere encourage their membership in the network and its maintenance. In contrast, those who achieve internationalization tend to leave the local system altogether (like Caparrós) or remain in a peripheral position within the global circuit. Essentially, authors with a "local" distribution still rely on the "community" for support, as well as for potential material and aesthetic exchange.

Additionally, it is evident that authors who have achieved "global" status have expanded beyond the original Shanghai network and integrated themselves into other transnational networks. As discussed in a previous article, this integration into local or multiple global networks not only impacts the circulation and reception of their books but also influences their ideas and aesthetics (Rodríguez-Alfonso 2022, 2024). Writers within a smaller sociability sphere, such as a local network, have access to a narrower diversity of ideas, though these ideas tend to be more pronounced due to the dense ties within local networks. Equally, authors exposed to multiple global networks have access to a broader understanding of dominant aesthetics in the international market, leading to more multifaceted works but also possibly conforming more frequently to market standards. This dynamic contributes to the emergence of experimental and highly local aesthetics in authors such as Chitarroni, Guebel, or Cohen.

16. The table and full metrics corresponding to the figure [Figure 13](https://github.com/RodAlfonso/Mapping-Cultural-Networks-in-the-Global-South-Book-Market/blob/main/2003-2010.csv) can be found on <https://github.com/RodAlfonso/Mapping-Cultural-Networks-in-the-Global-South-Book-Market/blob/main/2003-2010.csv>.

While the primary objective of the study did not center on this aspect, the obtained results have proven invaluable in unveiling or, at times, refuting existing literature on the literary group. On the one hand, assumptions of antagonism between writers from Shanghai and their contemporaries around the Planeta group (Klein 2014; Rodríguez-Carranza 1992) have been dismantled. On the other hand, it has been demonstrated that writers such as Juan Forn or Rodrigo Fresán were part of the Shanghai circle during the 1990s, exposing the disparity between the actual social structure in the field and the promotion of an authorial discourse that pits supposedly different schools against each other in pursuit of demonstrating originality.

On another level, the extensive bibliography emphasizing Martín Caparrós as the “head” of the group during the last decade of the twentieth century, and the most well-recognized author of that time, has been questioned. This came to light upon the discovery of the significance of C.E. Feiling before his abrupt demise. In contradiction to previous literature (Conde de Boeck 2017; Sassi 2006) asserting that no women truly belonged to the group, our research has underscored the affiliation of more than one Argentinean female writer. Even when they were clearly segregated to the peripheral sections of the network, they were more closely connected to the group than has been reported. Lastly, while recent literature on the Shanghai group tends to prioritize the significance of writers such as Alan Pauls, Martín Caparrós, or Daniel Guebel (Castro 2009; Conde de Boeck 2022), the results unveil the key role played by Luis Chitarroni and C.E. Feiling in the maintenance and legitimization of the group throughout the years.

Bourdieu’s concept of the cultural field emphasizes the struggle for recognition, yet the network analysis approach reveals that legitimation is just one facet of a multifaceted system of relationships. Within this system, mediation and circulation hold significant roles on both social and aesthetic planes. Moreover, the rigid dichotomy between opposing groups has been deconstructed through a meticulous examination of the Shanghai network structure. This analysis has unveiled that writers from seemingly opposing circles, such as Juan Forn and Rodrigo Fresán associated with the “Planetarios” group, were in fact part of the same social ecosystem as the Shanghai writers.

This approach sheds light on another limitation of Bourdieu’s theory: The differentiation between “actual” divergent aesthetic agendas and the adoption of “authorial postures”, as named by Meizoz (2007). The necessity to discern between a writer’s public demeanor and the true essence of their literary work becomes evident upon discovering that both “Planetarios” and “Shanghai” authors, who projected themselves as contenders for local literary power, were interconnected within the same social network.

Furthermore, Bourdieu’s assertion regarding the “autonomy” of the cultural field has been challenged by our study of the Shanghai network. Social and symbolic capitals, exemplified by metrics like centrality, eigenvector centrality, and density possessed by network mediators, do not guarantee visibility and legitimation within the Latin American “eccentric” circles of global literature, where groundbreaking works often remain confined to the local sphere.

In this sense, this article has not proposed a deterministic relationship between internationalization and social capital. Rather, a clear example has been our insistence on

the role played by the “brokers” or mediators who have held high social capital, which may not necessarily serve to achieve internationalization for themselves, while playing a crucial role in legitimizing and promoting the work of their peers. Moreover, the article recognizes that other factors play significant roles in shaping the circulation and globalization of Latin American authors, such as gender, being the disadvantage faced by women writers in the group, although not as noticeable through the SNA performed in this paper. The style or themes of their literary works, where those with distinct local references or experimental nature may face greater challenges, could still play a significant role, as previous studies have pointed out (Apter 2006; Walkowitz 2015), as well as factors like migration, social class, or even death.

In another vein, considering the temporal division of the regional publishing system over the last four decades mentioned in the introductory section, internationalization and/or recognition through awards and transnational publishers may be deliberately rejected by authorial decisions. By 2010, the majority of cultural relations within the Shanghai group had disappeared, and the network’s decline had progressed. While some social interactions among the writers still remained, they were not sufficient to sustain the vitality of the literary network. Additionally, the second decade of the twenty-first century witnessed significant changes in the book market and literature’s modes of circulation. Visibility and legitimation strategies analyzed in this study have been dramatically replaced by new forms facilitated by the World Wide Web, which offer global and immediate reach such as blogs or platforms as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

The Latin American publishing market has undergone significant transformations, with publishing in small and independent houses no longer seen as a limitation for national isolation. Many books now circulate across the continent and internationally. Furthermore, the aesthetic and political avant-garde orientation of these local publishing houses has led many authors to intentionally publish with them, distancing themselves from the imperatives of readability and mass-marketing imposed by large transnational publishers. As previously mentioned, the choice to publish with small and ‘cult’ publishers can be an authorial preference in recent decades, providing as much or even more symbolic capital than publishing with a large publishing house, as illustrated in the Argentine system by the writer César Aira (Riveiro 2020, 2021). In this sense, members of the Shanghai group such as Luis Chitarroni, Sergio Chejfec, or Matilde Sánchez exemplify this shift towards local independent publishers at the expense of international ones, at the end of the first decade of the 2010s. This shift may be motivated by the pursuit of “distinction” and “exclusivity” on which this new form of symbolic capital rests. In conclusion, Shanghai’s case exemplifies how an author’s position within the network is closely linked to international success, while it also highlights the complexities and various factors influencing the trajectory of those writers who came from Latin America at the turn of the twentieth to the twenty-first century.

5. Summary

This study has aimed to demonstrate the relationship between social networks and the recognition and globalization of Latin American writers. The case of the Shanghai group

has provided examples of the significance of these social structures in shaping literature circulation in the region during the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century.

The evolution of the structure of the Shanghai network has revealed several findings. Firstly, the study has highlighted discrepancies with the existing academic literature on the group: On the one side, the prominence of figures like Matilde Sanchez or Jorge Dorio, often emphasized in the literature, appears minimal. On the other side, the statements on Martin Caparrós centrality during the 1990s have been proved to be inaccurate, underscoring the importance of authors like Feiling or Chitarroni to the group. Additionally, the inclusion of authors from the Planeta group in the Shanghai network during the 1990s challenges established notions of confrontation between both groups and, in contrast to Bourdieu's theories of literary field fights, highlights the differences between literary posture and network structure.

Secondly, it has been shown that the network's structure and functionality vary according to the stage of the literary group. In its initial phase, author-nodes with the greatest social recognition have the highest PageRank or Weighted Degree metrics, equating centrality in the network with the symbolic capital acquired in the local space. At that time, lesser-known figures like Chitarroni, who have a high eigenvector centrality, play a crucial role in maintaining the network and recognizing its most central members, suggesting a regular, if not strict, opposition between mediation and centrality within the network in the cultural environment.

The group's later stages illustrated a significant change in the network's structure and positions, where high values of PageRank or Weighted Degree do not always correspond to international recognition. The latter points to the shift in the function acquired by network membership, lately a means of mutual support in local literary environments. These differences between social capital and symbolic capital in local versus global contexts are not rigid, however, as Alan Pauls exemplifies illuminating how well-recognized international authors can still serve as mediators within the small local network to which they once belonged.

By employing distant theories and digital methods, this research has illustrated the interconnectedness of internal and external network distribution with the symbolic capital of its members, while acknowledging other factors that go beyond a deterministic view of social networks. The study has highlighted the peripheral position of women writers within this male-dominated circle and even more the crucial role played by *brokers* actors or *gatekeepers* in enhancing the visibility of their peers. Given that the South-North movement continues to be central to the dissemination and appraisal of Latin American artists, this research has sought to provide a geographical dimension to the asymmetrical and unequal process of valuing cultural products originating outside the Northern Hemisphere.

6. Data Availability

Data can be found here: <https://github.com/ARodAlfonso/Mapping-Cultural-Networks-in-the-Global-South-Book-Market>. The magazines that gave rise to the

corpus were consulted in the bibliographic collections of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, where access is restricted due to copy right reasons.

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