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# A case study of unquiet translators

## Relating legal translators' subservient and subversive habitus to socialization

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Remarkable efforts have been made in Translation and Interpreting Studies to test the subservient habitus hypothesis formulated by Simeoni (1998) in his seminal work. In the face of increasing evidence that translators tend to reproduce a given society's or community's prevalent norms and contribute to the stability of such norms (Toury 1978), subversive translation practices have been reported (Delabastita 2011; Woods 2012) and indeed promoted as a way of fostering social and cultural change (Levine 1991; Venuti 1992). However, insights into how translators' subservient or subversive habitus develop and depart from each other are still lacking. In order to shed light on this gray area, this article scrutinizes the contrasts between the habitus of professional legal translators who acquiesce to and who reject the norms governing their positions in the field. Special attention is given to those who decide to abandon the translation field. Their behavior is examined by relating habitus to forms of socialization and studying the implications of their strategies. Based on a case study drawn from interview data, this article focuses on the social practices of resistance and rebellion vis-à-vis subservience, and the impact of both on translation workplaces, work processes, and translators' futures.

**Keywords:** legal translation, socialization, translators' habitus, subversive habitus, deviant behavior, interviews, workplace studies

### 1. Introduction: Facing the unexpected

This paper draws on unexpected data from interviews I conducted between 2013 and 2015. The interviewees were translators working for an international organization based in Geneva, Switzerland, where I had worked myself. At the time of the interviews, however, I was working for the University of Graz, Austria. My goal was to understand the differences I had perceived among my former fellow translators

regarding their relationships with other agents in the organization and the impact of those relationships on their job satisfaction and wellbeing. To do so, I designed a basic schema with relevant constructs for in-depth interviews (see Monzó-Nebot [2019] for further details). The project was eventually expanded to other organizations and different settings. This article draws on data from one organization only in order to account for the interactions between Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' (the ingrained dispositions guiding agents' behavior) and 'field' (a social space, in this case, the organization).

The interviews conducted allowed me to gain a deep understanding of the agents I was interviewing and the differences among them. This increased awareness opened unexpected avenues to other sources of information, and led me to request participation from lawyers in the same organization so as to take into consideration their perspectives on shared incidents in order to build a case study. Through this, two phenomena became salient: On the one hand, some agents acted strategically to make their interests prevail against the institutional *doxa* (the usual operational rules of the institution), while others showed a clear disposition to perpetuate what they saw as what was 'taken for granted' in the organization. On the other hand, while most translators continuously invested in maintaining and advancing their positions in the field, others had decided to abandon professional practice as translators.

Following Bourdieu's theory of practice (1980), the very existence of a field (a social space) depends on agents having interest in personally investing in the 'game'. A field presupposes the institutionalization of a viewpoint (a particular axiology) and a way of conducting oneself (a particular logic). Being able to participate in the field requires a pre-reflexive acceptance of its rules and a belief in the possible benefits of doing so (Bourdieu 1997). How can we explain, then, how after entering the field someone would decide that the game is no longer worth the trouble? Is it because they are unable to invest in that game, or are they, rather, simply uninterested in the stakes?

Building on the interaction between field and habitus, I focus on socialization processes to clarify how personal dispositions influence (a) the strategies that translators perform to advance or adapt their own *doxas*, that is, their own unexamined assumptions, and (b) the adherence to the shared *illusio*, the perception that following the norms is worth the effort and actually the only option within the specific field. To do so, I will first review some relevant aspects of habitus and related notions, examine previous uses of habitus in the field of Translation and Interpreting Studies (TIS), and discuss actual examples of translators deviating from social norms. In the discussion, I will stress ancillary notions and introduce some fine-tuning in order to better elucidate the data examined in this case study.

## 2. Habitus and behavior

Habitus, part of Bourdieu's ontology for the description of social practices, refers to the community of ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions which, through our experience in social spaces, becomes part of our mindsets and guides our actions. Habitus is an embodiment of the social structures shared by the members of a community, and their translation into individual codes act much like musical scores which harmonize and organize social behavior. Individuals derive principles from their experience in social spaces which they use to make sense of the social arena, but also to make decisions as to how to behave within any given community. Playing from the same sheet music, different individuals spontaneously align their practices (Bourdieu 1997, 211), thereby reproducing what is expected in a particular community or society (Bourdieu 1972, 43, 151, 282) and making the probable a reality (Bourdieu 1997, 210). Habitus is said to be homogeneous among the members of a group – class (Bourdieu 1972, 119) – as it is the result of the individuals adapting to the structures and norms surrounding them because they are reproduced by those sharing the same social group.

Habitus, however, may vary between individuals in the same group when their social experiences differ. The rules in vogue in a different social space produce the same effect in their relevant context, and individuals who are at home in different social spaces may modify their scores or have more than one tune in their repertoire. Habitus is likely to be transformed when exposed to a field with which an individual is not familiar (Reay, Crozier, and Clayton 2009), especially when agents are capable of “mundane reflexivity” (Sayer 2005, 29ff.) and develop self-awareness as a result of their accumulation of experiences of habitus dislocations between different norm systems. The development of habitus is a dynamic process and, when discussing how habitus is formed, Bourdieu embraces William James's (1884) seminal tenet that it is running from a bear (as opposed to the bear itself) that causes our fear. Indeed, by acting like others we progressively align our thoughts and emotions with those who live their social lives in the same field (Bourdieu 1972, 291). By being exposed to specific ways of perceiving, interpreting, and acting on the empirical world, we become disposed to follow suit (Bourdieu 1997, 231).

The way actors position themselves vis-à-vis norms is a common and constant concern in sociology and social psychology (e.g., Ryan 1995). Bourdieu's views bring imitation to the fore, whereby mimesis acts both as a verbal and non-verbal shibboleth which opens the door to social acceptance and to successful social lives. This is only possible by internalizing practices, and thus eventually allowing the individual to identify with the group and its norms, integrate into the social system (see Piaget [1936]1977), and align with its beliefs, values, and behaviors.

Indeed, experiencing and learning the norms of our social environment (socialization) establishes “a high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality (as well as identity, of course)” (Berger and Luckman 1966, 183).

## 2.1 Working with habitus in TIS

The ways translators position themselves vis-à-vis norms is also a common concern in TIS. Using habitus to understand actors’ relationships to norms, translation scholars have scrutinized either historical data that may shed light on translators’ circumstances, stances, and actions (see Meylaerts 2010) or the translators’ own accounts of their backgrounds, experiences, decisions, and motives (see Sela-Sheffy 2005), usually in combination with specific textual behavior (see Inghilleri 2003) or field descriptions (see Gouanvic 2005), to retrospectively identify such internalized norms of translation behavior (Toury 1978). In these analyses, two patterns have emerged. A first and dominant pattern suggests that translators are especially gifted at identifying and reproducing a system’s norms and adhere to the belief that “good” translating (Simeoni 1998, 11) is about the acquiescence of a subservient role in respect to a myriad of agents and factors (12). Translators seem to share rules to predict what other agents will accept and be comfortable with in order to plan and structure their decisions and renderings, taking into account the particular circumstances of the project and delivering a conforming solution.

This first set of patterns led Simeoni to formulate the subservient habitus hypothesis, suggesting that, due to historical circumstances yet to be scrutinized, translation has occupied a subservient position in social hierarchies. Given this historically developed social arrangement, being a translator entails the acquiescence to a (predominantly) subservient role conforming to heteronomous rules (12, 23).

Studies have tested or found data confirming this subservient habitus hypothesis in legal and institutional contexts (Monzó-Nebot 2015; Fernández Sánchez 2019) by exploring translated renditions against work processes and field-specific constraints and requirements. Other approaches to behavioral norms advance similar tenets, such as the law of growing standardization (Toury 1995), which states that translators resort to conservative options, reducing variation and innovation even when originals introduce novelties or present a wider linguistic repertoire. These have also been tested in translated legal corpora (Biel 2014). Nevertheless, the apparent scarcity of discussions suggests that the academic field may see no issue with the acquiescence to subservient positions and heteronomous norms in legal translation. Indeed, the conservative nature of the field of legal translation has been proposed as the rationale behind translation strate-

gies (e.g., Mayoral Asensio and Muñoz Martín 1997; Alcaraz Varó and Hughes 2002) but only rarely problematized (Martín Ruano 2014). Meeting hypothesized needs regarding faithfulness to the source text (or the alleged unity of linguistic versions) and consistency within the target system is enshrined as *the* way to ensure a successful translation. The “relentless quest for equivalence” in this regard, along with efforts to name and define the boundaries of specialisms, seem to be the exclusive focus of translation scholars when approaching legal translation (Biel and Engberg 2013, 2).

On the other hand, and especially in the field of literary translation, the study of translators’ habitus has revealed transgressive practices. This second set of practices has been linked to the existence of peripheral or marginal fields with their own prevalent norms (Ben-Ari 2012) which are capable of engendering alternative habitus, or the translators’ playing *alldoxia* (Bourdieu 1971), transferring and balancing types of capital across fields, and finding a place between subservience and authority by practicing or arrogating to themselves the power to create (Sela-Sheffy 2010) and to transgress (Léger 2002).

Nevertheless, studies on norm deviation are comparatively scarce, including in TIS. *How* and *when* translators successfully depart from the expected heteronomous norms of literalism, prudence, and conservatism is one of the unsolved questions in legal TIS. Despite garnering insufficient attention, critical and creative approaches have emphasized productive developments stemming from subversion (Šarčević 2000), as well as alternative priority systems which are still largely unexplored (Hale 2005; Vidal Claramonte 2005). The basic tenet, also present in the well-known debate between Newmark, Toury, Hermans, and Bush (1998), is that it all depends on individuals’ “view of the target text situation and relevant factors” (Engberg 2016, 41). Reviewing the evolution of legal translation norms shows how innovation and deviation, far from being tantamount to irresponsibility (see Bourdieu 1972, 120), can actually engender a new normal (e.g., Šarčević’s [1997, 40–41] report of the Rossel–Cesana debate).

This provides a means to explore deviant behavior within legal translation and interpreting studies. As has been highlighted, habitus is the result of a process of interactions with norm systems; it is embodied in the individual but may change when exposed to different social spaces, even rewriting previously acquired codes. While considered to be homogeneous and shared within a community, particular habitus are not necessarily coherent (Bourdieu 1997) and mismatches may actually productively revolutionize social spaces in conflict situations (Krais 2006). The lack of interest in deviancy in Bourdieu’s work, as stressed by Meylaerts (2005, 281), does not preclude its usefulness to account for norm-breaking behavior, as shown by Yu and Xu (2016). In their study, the inter-

est in accruing increased symbolic capital and the strategies pursued proved key in changing the structure of a literary field.

## 2.2 Interest: An essential ingredient of a successful habitus

Interest is an essential part of Bourdieu's conceptualization. He sees social practices as always responding to a motivation, even if such motivation is not rationally calculated. Notably, Bourdieu extends the notion of interest beyond the economic realm and introduces a typology of capital together with the notion of investment or 'strategy' (Bourdieu 1980). Capital may be economic, but also social (e.g., personal relations) or cultural (e.g., scientific knowledge). These basic types of capital may be found in different forms, embodied by the individual (e.g., the knowledge possessed), objectified (e.g., works of art), or institutionalized (e.g., educational credentials from a prestigious university). All those types of capital, material and symbolic, may be combined and invested in relevant situations to advance specific interests, even though the results are never certain. 'Strategy' refers to how an actor believes that their capital should be invested in order to achieve some specific outcome, and necessarily entails considering the rules of the field. Indeed, being right or wrong in a strategy depends upon how adequately habitus and field are attuned.

The 'feel' for the game that drives continued investment is based on the *illusio* of actually believing that playing the game is worth the effort, regardless of one's position in the field. When entering a particular field, agents tacitly accept its rules, the struggles, goals, and worldviews – at least while the logic and axiologies of social life do not create conflicts. Bourdieu himself warns that habitus and practices remain in perfect harmony only if the conditions of their creation are identical to the conditions where they operate (Bourdieu 1980, 105).

## 2.3 Decaying orbits and going astray

However scarce, existing studies provide the necessary grounds for further research into why translators choose to conform or rebel in specific situations, or even to desert the translation field altogether. The latter case in particular requires us to reach beyond translation norms, beyond the "macro–micro relationship involved where a translation event has occurred or will occur," and also beyond "the role of the translator in producing or maintaining normative practices within such [translational] activity" (Inghilleri 2003, 244). Translators do not only translate. They work and socialize, have conflicts and love affairs. Habitus can help us to understand, explain, and formulate further and more nuanced hypotheses and laws of translators' behavior, but not necessarily by examining the

norms of textual behavior. Moving the focus from textual to workplace studies (see Risku, Rogl, and Milošević 2020), systematic comparisons between conforming and deviant translators can increase our understanding of *all* translation (a claim formulated by Harris [1976] in reference to non-professional translation). Although this study may contribute to understanding translational activity, the goal is to shed light on non-translatorial social practices performed by translators. Drawing on the data gathered through interviews with seventeen translators and one lawyer working for the same international organization, the socially subversive and the dissident are explored.

### 3. Translators' habitus: Studying the submissive and the subversive

The interviews used in this case study showed interesting instances of dissent from prevailing *doxas* that moved some translators to act strategically in some situations while others acquiesced to the norms of the institution for which they worked when facing similar issues. Further, in some cases, translators lost interest in investing any further in the field and performed what may be said to be the most irregular social practice for translators: leaving the field of translation and opting for different professional opportunities. This section offers an overview of cases of compliance and dissent as the basis to discuss the differences between conforming and non-conforming responses.

#### 3.1 Institutional conditions and personal paths

The interviewees in this study are seventeen translators and one lawyer working for one intergovernmental organization. Clearance for the interviews was given in 2013 by the Service Director. All interviewees were informed of the purpose of the interview and explicitly accepted participation. The organization is officially trilingual (English, French, and Spanish) and, in practice, most documents are drafted in English and then translated into French and Spanish. The institution produces documents dealing with a wide range of topics, mainly in legal and economic areas, but also in scientific and technical domains. Although translators may be assigned documents from any domain, preference is given to specific translators for specific topics.

All the translators in this study worked in-house from both English and French into Spanish, which was their mother tongue. The translators had different nationalities. At the time of the interviews, five of the seventeen translator participants were no longer working as translators.



The relatively high outward mobility in this organizational field (five out of seventeen translators had withdrawn from their translation activities), especially for those translators specializing in legal and economic domains (five out of eleven), led me to conduct further research into this issue. In the following pages, I will first summarize some data around the constructs researched (socialization, structural position and social identity, prevailing *doxa* and adherence to *illusio*, and reported interactions and investment strategies). I will then present the cases of conflict to introduce differences in acquiescent and dissident tendencies and capital investment strategies, and then point out issues related to the adherence and disaffection vis-à-vis the *illusio* that playing the game is worth it. The perspectives of those who had chosen to withdraw from translating (hereinafter collectively called Group W) and those who were still translators (hereinafter called Group P) will be highlighted and then discussed.

### 3.1.1 *Presenting the interviews*

The interviews were conducted with individual participants at different places which included their workplace, a local pub, a local restaurant, a café in the area, and their home. The interviews with translators took place in Spanish (twelve) or Catalan (five), depending on the interviewee's preference.<sup>1</sup> The interview with the lawyer was conducted in English. All the interviews were held face-to-face, and were recorded and transcribed by me. The duration of each interview varied, and ranged from forty-five minutes to two hours. A total of twenty-nine translators working for this organization were invited to participate and the seventeen participants were able to accommodate a time and a place for the interviews during my visits.

The questions loosely followed Bourdieu's constructs but the interaction was structured to allow interviewees to elaborate on their experiences. The data captured were analyzed by combining content and narrative analyses (see Monzó-Nebot 2019). Topics were first identified and codified using semantic reductions and then structured. For the narrative analysis, episodes (coherent sequences of narrated events) were identified and then the experiences from the different agents were systematized. Conflicts in the organization were a particularly rich source for the narrative analysis. These conflicts referred to particular translation situations but also to working processes more generally, and to work-related interpersonal issues. The latter included expected promotions not granted or protracted personal conflicts between specific agents. The episodes included in this analysis of interprofessional and intraprofessional contacts and conflicts were presented by different agents, thereby allowing for an intersubjective account.

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1. Excerpts from these interviews have been translated into English by me.

### 3.1.2 *Introducing the participants*

The translators interviewed come from remarkably different pre-professional socialization paths, including family contexts and social classes (although they all had access to tertiary education). Their international experience and exposure to multilingualism started at different ages, showing substantial diversity in their access to linguistic capital. As for their first university education, undergraduate studies in law, languages, and translation were the most common, with engineering, technology, and combined specialisms being less frequent. Several participants had subsequent degrees in either law, psychology, or audiovisual translation (not a part of their daily duties), or had completed translation-related research programs. In what follows, university training will be referred to as either domain-specific (law, economics, politics), technical (information technology, engineering), or linguistic or translation (translation and interpreting, modern languages) degrees to facilitate comparison.

The participants' years of experience in the same organization also varied and ranged from two to over twenty years. Their professional experience was largely comprised of in-house work for international organizations, and most had worked for the private market before. Some had previously specialized in technical and scientific translation (six) and most in legal and economic translation (eleven). Their ages varied from late twenties to early sixties; eight were women and nine were men.

These data describe the participating translators as socially and demographically diverse. They have different family and educational backgrounds, different nationalities and political experiences, and differing and multiple professional experiences. However, all had access to an education and had intensive training, which entails a minimum amount of social privilege. While differences do not disappear when considering Group W (withdrawing translators) and Group P (persistent translators) separately, the variety of difference is in fact reduced (see Tables 1 and 2). Even though all Group W translators had specialized in legal and economic texts, their educational backgrounds were slightly more diverse, focusing on domain- or translation-specific training at the undergraduate level combined with domain-specific or translation academic work at the postgraduate level.

These differences emerged at an early stage in the analysis of the data and the possible existence of regular patterns between socialization and behavior aroused interest.

**Table 1.** Educational background for Group W translators

Translator	Undergraduate training	Graduate training
WT1	Translation + Domain	Domain
WT2	Domain	Domain
WT3	Domain	None
WT4	Translation	Translation (research-oriented) + Domain
WT5	Translation	Translation (research-oriented)

**Table 2.** Educational background for Group P translators

Translator	Undergraduate training	Graduate training
PT1	Domain + Languages	Domain
PT2	Language + Translation	Translation
PT3	Language	Non-related domain
PT4	Language	Language (research)
PT5	Translation	Translation (practice)
PT6	Translation	None
PT7	Domain	None
PT8	Technical	Technical
PT9	Technical + Language	None
PT10	Language	None
PT11	Technical + Translation	None
PT12	Language + Technical	None

### 3.2 Analyzing conflicts, acquiescence, and dissent

This section presents data related to investment strategies in cases where personal and institutional *doxas* and interests were at odds. The purpose is to discuss individuals' social strategies – particularly the kind of capital invested and the decision to invest – against the success or failure of their strategy within the institutional context. Their decisions to stay or to leave will be further discussed.

#### 3.2.1 *Negotiating text-based translation decisions*

Translators were asked to elaborate on specific instances where they had had conflicts with other members of staff regarding translation decisions or solutions. The focus was not the solution adopted but their strategy to negotiate the advance-

ment of their own interest (as defined by their own *doxa*). Once the incidents had been described by translators, the lawyer was invited on the basis of his position (head of a team of drafters) in order to gain his views on the same issues to elucidate how translators' strategies had been received.

All translators reported having had issues with the quality of source texts and, in some cases, expressed that drafters (usually trained in law or economics) had limited linguistic competence. Issues referred to included unnecessary ambiguities, incoherence, and inconsistencies. Among the Group P translators, one suggested that drafters had grown used to translators correcting mistakes and did not pay as much attention anymore (PT3), whereas one translator in Group W suggested that drafters were not as open to corrections as they should be (WT2). A common idea in Group P was that drafters did not understand what translation entailed and did not provide useful, but rather redundant, information whenever approached. On the contrary, Group W were unanimous in stating that knowing the people responsible for the documents (or those above the people responsible) was the best way to introduce corrections and clarify ambiguities in original texts, as it allowed for specific comments to be heard and elicited. Both groups decried that they had been asked not to contact requesting officers (responsible for sending and receiving the translation job), and PT3 explained that "they were fed up with calls from the French section, the Spanish section, the pool [...]." As translators confirmed, no coordination mechanism had been established among translators themselves and the Docs Control section (the section responsible for managing in-house documentation) was asked to centralize queries.

When looking at intraprofessional relations, a number of disagreements were reported regarding the terminology established by the Spanish section in the legal domain, specifically by the head terminologist. Among Group P, comments signaled the acquiescence to solutions provided, with some commenting further on specific considerations. PT7, for instance, referred to a mistake being reproduced in subsequent translations because it was enshrined in a founding treaty and became in-house terminology. WT4 and WT5 showed discomfort with terminology work, emphasizing the difference between specialized and non-specialized contexts and showing a disparity of *doxas*:

You can't decide which Spanish term you'll use for an English legal term by googling frequencies. Either you have a legal corpus in Spanish or you talk to law or legal translation experts. When I asked about the change, [person] simply said 'it doesn't sound right'. So she googled. (WT4)

As for technical and scientific terminology, translators showed high satisfaction with the reviser in charge of that domain, where terminology was identified as the main difficulty for translators. Referring to the reviser concerned, "he convenes

training sessions” (PT8), “he is always respectful” (WT4), “he is the nicest person” (WT5), and “he understands what is being said, even if it’s a list of words, and helps you understand” (PT12) are representative statements in both groups.

The desire for training as expressed by PT8 was widespread, especially among translators with no domain-specific degrees. Both content-related issues and the organizational structure were emphasized in voicing a desire for such training: “We used to have sessions where the divisions would introduce themselves to others. We could learn what everyone was doing and they learned what translators were” (PT3).

### 3.2.2 *Negotiating institutional workflows*

As I was aware of a specific instance of changes in institutional workflow that involved translation, I elicited information in this regard during the interviews. The case dealt with ambiguities or inconsistencies in the English versions of documents that were identified in the translation process by both Spanish and French translators. Those ambiguities were corrected before publication with the help of drafters (lawyers and economists). However, the English version containing inconsistencies or mistakes had already been published. The Spanish translators (specifically PT1 and PT7 led by WT3) discussed the issue and sought the agreement of the French translators. Together they asked to meet with the team of drafters and pinpointed some cases where internal inconsistencies in the English documents (including terminological variability and ambiguities) may hinder understanding. The meeting resulted in an agreement to modify the working process. From then on, no linguistic version was considered finished until drafters *and* translators had had the chance to discuss the document. As reported by the translators, semantic and pragmatic knowledge of domain-specific issues became crucial in persuading the drafters. As WT3 stated, “I knew what was being said and I knew the subtlety that was being negotiated because I had negotiated those very issues myself.”

The lawyer who was interviewed for this study had not participated in the original meeting where the process was re-engineered, but showed appreciation that translators were helping his team do their job:

I can tell you exactly how they improve our panel reports. [...] They will point out to us either – as I say – ‘mistakes’ in the original, just obvious mistakes, or [...] they can point out inconsistencies in like ‘you referred to something by this name over here but then by this name over here’ [...] So at that level they certainly improve the text.

In a different case, PT2 reported an issue with the proceedings of some panel meetings. As the lawyer later explained, these documents are kept as records but

do not produce any effects. Experts from different countries are invited to meet at the organization's headquarters on the basis of their expertise. They discuss the arguments for and against solutions to solve the issue, usually a disagreement between Member States, and decide. These proceedings are translated once the experts have left. Sometimes those documents contain mistakes, including incomplete sentences. This was the example mentioned by PT2, who requested that the drafters provide the complete sentence in the English source text. In reporting on the case, PT2 focused on having no idea what she was supposed to say in Spanish as she had a string of words with no coherent meaning. However, the lawyer focused on the sentence not being complete (not the meaning), evincing not only a linguistic theory of translation but a grammatical theory of language, and commented that the translator was asking them to do something they were not able to:

Once they are back to their countries, the institution cannot afford to bring them back [...] just to complete one sentence. That's the document as issued, and that's what needs translating. I understood her frustration, but if it doesn't make sense, that's what we work with.

Other comments made by translators insisted on the importance of 'substantive' knowledge. Translators generally perceive that they are considered 'support' (WT2) or 'semiprofessional' (WT3) colleagues, and substantive domain-specific knowledge makes a difference during interactions. In this institution, all staff members are bilingual or multilingual, and no one professional profile stands out as having more linguistic capital than any other (WT2, PT10). However, being aware of the institution's mission and the nuances that are required in the negotiation of documents is indeed positively perceived by (and ensures cooperation with) other professional staff (WT1, WT3, WT4, PT1, PT7, PT10).

It is noteworthy that this reflection does not extend to translators specializing in scientific and technical texts. The lead translator in this area, with extensive professional experience in the private market and European and international institutions, participated in the interviews (PT9) and acknowledged what may seem like considerable autonomy:

If there are issues, we may ask the countries. The documents we translate are not drafted here. But then again, that paragraph we have trouble with may have been drafted by an intern, so it makes no sense. We try to translate the texts into good Spanish, and that's what the institution wants from us.

PT9 stressed the usefulness of working with support staff and translators, but not with other professional staff at the organization.

### 3.2.3 *Abandoning the field*

When those who had left behind translation were asked to provide their reasons, three translators referred to ideas regarding ‘good translating’. Their *doxas* did not seem to match what was expected, and their demands to follow what they believed to be good practice found strong opposition, mostly from their own superiors, not other professionals. In two cases (WT1 and WT3), the reasons for leaving were career-related since they had opportunities to attain higher positions in different areas of the same organization. Their capital and investment strategies proved more successful in areas outside of the translation section, which is a fact they seemed to regret (see R2 below). The following reasons are not verbatim reproductions of respondents’ words, but rather summarize different motives given as to why the individuals chose to abandon the translation field:

- R1. I wasn’t doing a good job. (WT1, WT2, WT4)
- R2. I couldn’t use my skills. (WT1, WT2, WT3, WT4)
- R3. There was no way I could change the way they work. (WT1, WT2)
- R4. Revisers got their jobs by staying long enough. (WT2)
- R5. Those in policy-making positions do not understand what translation means. (WT1, WT2, WT4)
- R6. Managers are not aware of the nuances of the job and cannot be seen as authorities. (WT1)
- R7. Some translators don’t talk to lawyers. (WT1, WT2, WT3, WT4)

No comments were made about issues such as status or financial compensation, which are generously represented in the literature. Conversely, translators’ *doxas*, and their understanding of their duties, responsibilities, and skills has received limited attention in academic reflection (with the exception of the interpreter’s role). This was a point, nevertheless, that the translators emphasized in their interviews.

## 4. Discussion: Harnessing the interaction between habitus and field

Elaborating upon the common features of the different cases presented in Section 3 may shed light on how habitus and field interact in this organization. The discussion in this section is articulated around four main axes: the need to further expound upon the issue of translator socialization in order to guide analysis, how the different *doxas* coexisting in the organization interact, how socialization may impact adherence to one particular *doxa* and the field’s *illusio*, and the bearing of interactional power in loosening the adherence to *illusios*.

#### 4.1 Fine-tuning the concept of socialization to understand translators

The social spaces where the habitus is shaped are central in understanding its possibilities for both producing effects and adapting to different spaces. Yet, information on the socialization of translators is scarce (see Schöffner 2010, 243) and usually limited to specific translation spaces with a limited set of empirical assumptions (Meylaerts 2013, 108). In other disciplines too, specific reflections based on agents whose role requires them to travel physically or symbolically across social spaces are scarce. The usefulness of a model that could account for a variety of contexts, processes, and effects becomes evident in this analysis.

Regarding the data in this study, no clear evidence could be drawn from the parameters usually considered, such as class, cultural background, university training, and profession. Those deciding to leave held domain-specific and translation degrees, similar to those in the group who did not. It is worth noting, however, that none of the translators who had a technical university training (including one who holds a translation and interpreting degree as well) had decided to leave the field. Variation in class and professional or family networks was present in both groups. The years of experience within the organization did not seem to have any direct impact either. When I resorted to a previously elaborated model of translation-specific socialization typologies (Monzó-Nebot 2001, 2003), some insights were gained. The model follows the literature in psychology, sociology, and anthropology (Mead 1934), although evolutionary, cultural, genetic, and biological approaches are prominent in current socialization research. In anthropological approaches, stages of socialization are distinguished based on age (and cognitive development), and categorized into primary (mainly assisted by family members) and secondary (in early and full adulthood) stages. The model used stresses other differences: intensity of exposure, significance of others, awareness of purpose, and intensity of effects.

Throughout their primary socialization, translators (or any other agent for that matter) imitate the behavior of their significant others, relatives, and personal relations. They are driven by the need to be assisted, to learn what society is, and how to survive and attend to one's basic human needs. This first socialization shapes the individual's relationship with the world and includes the cultural filters we use to perceive what is relevant in our experiences and sense-making. Secondary socialization is developed more cautiously, and it widens the registers of the habitus based in the professional contexts experienced as adults. It entails learning from relevant others who have a limited influence on who we become, but who still shape our views of what we choose to contribute to society in adulthood. Finally, a more manipulative approach and the ability to define goals is required to quickly learn how humans operate in unfamiliar contexts; to learn



other social norms beyond our immediate contexts, sometimes based on textual information and nothing else. This is our tertiary socialization, a process that does not necessarily affect our embodied structures, where models are not internalized and no symmetry between objective and subjective experiences is required to benefit from the social interaction. The decreased intensity of tertiary socialization would allow translators to detach themselves from the social spaces where specific norms are practiced as their agency is only felt and sanctioned indirectly and within a different social space. Both secondary and tertiary socializations result in what Simeoni (1998, 18) calls “specialized professional habitus.”

The different means and intensities of socialization account for substantial variations in perception, interpretation, and action; reflect different social structures; shape meaning-making processes; and materialize in daily micro-practices in interaction. Most notably, the iteration of different socialization processes triggers awareness as to their socially situated nature and allows agents to behave increasingly manipulatively regarding the norms operating in specific social spaces or, as Toury (2012, 66) puts it, to maneuver between different sets of norms. What is ingrained in the habitus becomes visible and subject to critical thinking, and what can be reflected upon can be modified (Wacquant 2004). Awareness of the conventional nature of norms allows translators to choose to enact or disregard what is expected, and may account for differences in conforming or noncompliant behavior.

In the case under scrutiny, the combination and variety of tertiary socialization processes (see Table 3) seems to explain the acquiescence to heteronomous norms. Those translators having experienced professional contexts that presented them with multiple and different non-translation professionals showed a tendency to comply with what was expected, as evident in corrections from higher-ranked translators acting as revisers or more rarely from delegates or other professionals. They invested linguistic or domain-specific knowledge and expected the same in return. Even when the field (knowledge-intensive and domain-specific) did not react in the ways they expected (“lawyers are not helpful,” PT<sub>2</sub>), they went along with and continued to play a role in sustaining their interest in the field, accepting the rules and making sense of their perception as ‘support’ staff. In subfields which may be considered somewhat detached from the main capital in the organization (translation of scientific and technical texts), their expectations were attuned with their experience of the field (where the in-house *doxa* was established intra-professionally by a reviser) and their acquiescence to the norms created job-related satisfaction with minimal adjustments (establishing training sessions).

However, the participants with several secondary domain-specific socializations and limited tertiary socializations showed a very different stance. Their

investments were knowledge-intensive and approaching other professionals was perceived as part of their task. This will be commented upon further in Section 4.2.

**Table 3.** Secondary and tertiary socializations of Group W translators

Translator	University training	Professional experience	Translation experience
WT <sub>1</sub>	Translation and domain-specific	Multiple domain-specific in a number of countries	At the organization only
WT <sub>2</sub>	Domain-specific	As a trainer and domain-specific	Two years for other organizations, eighteen years at the organization
WT <sub>3</sub>	Domain-specific	Multiple and domain-specific in a number of countries	At the organization and informally in previous positions
WT <sub>4</sub>	Translation, translation research, and domain-specific	Translation only	Eighteen years for the private market (mostly legal), and three years at the organization
WT <sub>5</sub>	Translation and translation research	Translation only	One year for the private market, two years at the organization

Among Group P translators, no previous experience in domain-specific occupations was reported. Those with domain-specific degrees had started working either as freelance translators or for the organization in the year following graduation, as had participants with translation degrees. A clear difference between Group W and Group P was the lack of secondary socialization in domain-specific jobs, the lack of multiple tertiary socializations in translation-specific jobs, and the lack of translation-research training for Group P translators. The data thus seem to confirm the impact of socialization on acquiescent and dissenting habitus, and the relevance of distinguishing secondary and tertiary socialization processes.

#### 4.2 Competing *doxas*

The episodes regarding disagreements and conflicts were particularly revealing in terms of the existence of different competing *doxas* regarding translation in the field (see Table 4). To some (WT<sub>1</sub>, WT<sub>3</sub>, PT<sub>1</sub>, PT<sub>7</sub>), translation served the purpose of contributing to the institutions' goals and working with other agents to generate documents that fulfill those established goals, especially in terms of

facilitating negotiation among delegates. In this framework, engaging other agents when obstacles to the main purpose were found was the expected behavior in a teamwork environment, thus making change possible (labelled 'Doxa 1').

A second group (WT<sub>2</sub>, WT<sub>4</sub>, PT<sub>8</sub>, PT<sub>9</sub>, PT<sub>10</sub>) placed the institution at the center of their arguments, focused on facilitating communication between users, but saw their interactions with other professional groups as exceptional and to be limited. However, help was sought by other professionals in formal and informal ways, and procedures to obtain clarifications or improvements in source texts were actively used. Envisaged improvements focused on translation processes rather than institutional ones (*Doxa 2*).

A third group (WT<sub>5</sub>, PT<sub>2</sub>, PT<sub>3</sub>, PT<sub>5</sub>, PT<sub>6</sub>, PT<sub>11</sub>) believed that content was the most important element in approaching texts and that they should contribute to clarity and coherence while following the norms of the institution, which they saw as highly conventionalized (*Doxa 3*). Even if the focus of their work was the text (as in *Doxa 4*; see below), they sought the cooperation of other translators or officers when needed to solve ambiguities.

A final group (or exception, as only PT<sub>4</sub> held these views) stressed how they were expected to create well-written texts in good Spanish, embellishing the text when possible, within the limits required by the text itself. This translator did not seek co-operation with other professionals but would ask other translators if they encountered difficulties (*Doxa 4*).

**Table 4.** Basic features of competing *doxas* in the field

	Doxa 1	Doxa 2	Doxa 3	Doxa 4
Focus	Institution	Institution	Text	Text
Task	Knowledge intensive	Communication oriented	Institutional norms	Language intensive

The different *doxas* led to different kinds of capital being wielded in the pursuit of interests (good translating, new contracts, solving doubts, etc.). As per the interviews conducted, the most successful forms of capital in the organization were (1) knowledge in the areas of law and economics combined with social capital, and (2) scientific and technical knowledge on its own. In the case of legal and economic knowledge, investing both had allowed agents to make their solutions prevail over pressures in the field (see Section 3.2.2). These pressures, however, had prevailed when translators were asked not to contact requesting officers directly. In the case of technical and scientific knowledge, successful strategies differed. The absence of other staff specializing in those areas (there is no specific division working on scientific and technical issues, and the documents to be

translated are usually drafted by Member States) may explain why knowledge, as opposed to being used for negotiations, was showcased to establish boundaries. A subfield may be said to have emerged, with internal investment strategies (training sessions) and its own hierarchy (led by PT9). It is worth mentioning that linguistic capital seemed to have low symbolic value in the institution but was foregrounded by both groups as ‘good’ Spanish. However, it was not invested to advance specific interests vis-à-vis other agents.

### 4.3 Socialization and adherence to *doxas* and *illusios*

The different investment strategies performed by the participants raise some interesting issues relating socialization and predispositions to negotiate and to feel at ease with heteronomous definitions of ‘good’ translating. Given the size of the data set, the issues cannot be formulated as conclusions but may be worth testing as hypotheses with data from different contexts.

First, the analysis showed the need to distinguish between three attitudes to translation positions in the translation field: acquiescence, engaged resistance, and rejection and withdrawal. Translators showing acquiescence to heteronomous norms would engage in interpersonal contact when meanings needed to be clarified and doubts needed to be resolved, but not to negotiate the rules of the game. On the other hand, engaged resistance was identified when social and cultural capital were invested to obtain structural power and changes in work-related processes. These “good-will rebels,” in Bourdieu’s terms, operate norms to invest themselves with the appearance of being willing to conform and recognize the rules which they can neither respect nor refuse, and thus they do, in fact, actually contribute to their very existence (Bourdieu 1972, 120). In the cases analyzed, they sought consensus as to the changes to be introduced and used accepted procedures to justify the rationality of changes. A second group of rebels did not play along with the rules of the game when demanding changes but tried to introduce new solutions intraprofessionally based on their own reflection on translation and the organization processes. These changes were not accepted and translators were left with the feeling that advancing ‘good’ translating was not possible. These translators withdrew from their occupations, perceiving the organization leadership as ‘unethical’ or inefficient, and claiming their own rules or views as superior (Bourdieu 1972, 120). Even though desertion occurred among good-will rebels, this was triggered by career decisions, such as seeking promotion when they understood that their possibilities to further advance in the organization as translators were limited.

Against this background, the first ex-post hypothesis suggested is that translators with heavy domain-specific secondary socialization and lighter secondary

or tertiary translation-specific socialization will show a relatively high subversive tendency and try to advance their *doxas* by using the norms of the field to negotiate. These translators developed *phronesis* in the practice of translation (professional secondary socialization), but had chosen to pursue undergraduate domain-specific degrees and parallel training in languages and translation. They were present in both Group W and Group P, and consistently showed higher tendencies to reach consensus intraprofessionally before negotiating interprofessionally when issues involved work processes and ‘good’ translating. They used the prevailing norms to advance changes without breaking the rules.

On the other hand, translators with linguistic and translation-specific secondary socialization showed subservient tendencies even when showing discomfort with specific norms which had not yet been internalized (or which contradicted their internalized norm). What constitutes ‘good’ translating in the organization is conveyed through revisers’ corrections, with or without follow-up sessions. Meaning-making processes are based on such corrections at a textual rather than an organizational level. When dissonances with previously acquired norms arise, new norms are developed on the basis of organization-based contextualizations. Translators voice their discomfort in the process, but do not try to negotiate new norms. This results in either adaptation of existing habitus or the development of a reflexive habitus based on increased awareness of the possibility of diverse systems of translation norms. The former was the case for translators with technical degrees and for two translators with language degrees and past experiences in literary translation but not technical or legal translation. The latter was more frequent for translators holding translation degrees and past experiences with technical, legal, or multiple tertiary socializations.

Finally, a third hypothesis would suggest that translators with translation-related pre-professional and research training in translation develop strong adherence to autonomous norms resulting in the rejection of non-compliant organization-based norms. In these cases, their dislocated habitus did not result in a modified reflexive habitus which would allow the manipulation of new norm systems but in subversion based on a translation-specific reflexive habitus.

The interaction between what we believe is taken for granted (*doxa*) and what we believe is desirable (*illusio*) seems to have an impact on our acquisition of new norm systems. Awareness of the negotiated nature of norms and self-awareness of translators as political agents with possibilities to negotiate seems higher in content-related secondary socializations and seems to be increased by research-specific translation training. It may be interesting to further examine whether there is a discrete web of factors building a locus of subversive socialization within the community of translation researchers, a peripheral field of alternate norms, as Ben-Ari’s (2012) research suggests for literary translators.

#### 4.4 Power as mediator of *illusios*

A final issue that requires discussion is the dynamics leading to disaffection. The key in interpreting differences between acquiescence and rejection of translators' positions in the translation field seems to be their perceived capacity to impact the organization. Being able to produce structural changes was valued and seen as impossible for those who left, even when they had succeeded in previous negotiations (also for WT<sub>1</sub> and WT<sub>3</sub>, whose reasons for leaving the field were accessing higher professional ranks in the organization). Although they were willing to invest in increasing their competence, valued learning and continuing training, and had sound insights into the work of the organization, they were left feeling powerless in situations they considered relevant in their careers and refused to acquiesce to a position where they could not have an (increased) impact. They saw problems and differences between what they thought should be done and what the organization was doing. The issues highlighted referred to work processes, but also outcomes and quality-related aspects mainly of (other) translators, revisers, and managerial staff in higher positions. The targets of their dissatisfaction were mainly those in higher positions with an impact on their own work (revisers for translators, managers for revisers), and not those in other professions. Their *doxas* were at odds with those holding decision-making positions and they did not perceive a way forward.

### 5. Conclusions

A field's existence is based on the participation of agents, on their interest in investing in the field. Entering a field involves first the recognition of its value and then the acquisition of practical knowledge to make the necessary investments. Against this background, this case study asked why some translators ultimately decided no longer to invest in the translation field and moved to other fields, even if they remained in the same institution. To answer that question, their strategies of investment and knowledge of the rules of the game have been examined. Against a fine-tuned view of their socializations, the results show that rebels (in Bourdieu's terms), both good-will and deviant, showed knowledge of the rules, even deeper than some of their colleagues who continued their careers as translators, but lost their *illusio* and became disaffected, seeing in other fields a better venue to channel their interests (to develop either their translation or management skills). Two main reasons were identified. For some with intensive translation-research training, their lack of acquiescence to the prevailing *doxa*, to the idea of good translating, caused intra-professional conflicts that led to

extracting themselves from the situation where things were not right or even unethical. For others with domain-specific training and secondary socialization, a perceived lack of fairness in their own career possibilities, and also the lack of possibility to develop their management skills further in the translation field, led them to find fulfilment in other divisions or organizations.

This study shows how viewing translators as subject to shared pressures that result in homogeneous behavior is based on a limited set of empirical assumptions. When looking at deviant practices, we require models that can account for complex and multiple responses to the same institutional environments. This article has argued that fine-tuning the description of socialization may contribute to understanding the heterogeneity of responses and agency in the social behavior of translators.

Examining a wider variety of conflicts and workplaces would offer a more nuanced understanding of how socialization impacts adherence to heteronomous norms in the translation field. Increasing the sample, especially the sample of professional conflicts narrated, may help us gain deeper insights into the habitus that can make us increase our social and professional relevance by transforming heteronomous into autonomous norms. By first establishing consensus as to what works for translation according to translators and then moving on to mobilize the most adequate forms of capital to negotiate with the relevant agents, advances of translation-specific *doxas* may be possible. Further insights into the interactions between field and habitus, and into field-specific strategies of investment, including those referring to career opportunities, are needed to enhance our understanding of translators' behavior.

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