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Cultural Sociology

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Why cultural sociology: definitions and relevant epistemological considerations

Until relatively recently, Translation Studies as a discipline confined its research to the level of textual analysis, failing to acknowledge the broader contexts of both production and reception. It focused mainly on canonical, and often elite, artistic practices. In the last thirty years, however, translation scholars' interest in sociological approaches has steadily increased, and sociology of translation has now become a prominent sub-field in the area of Translation Studies that features constantly in textbooks and handbooks. Despite this apparent prominence, as we will discuss, the interdisciplinary dialogue between sociology, on the one hand, and translation, on the other, has tended to focus on specific approaches only, thus partly diminishing the potentialities of this interdisciplinary engagement. This chapter will discuss the interplay between sociology, and its methodological tools, and Translation Studies, exploring which research methods can be most fruitfully applied to the study of translation as a process and a practice. Beginning with an introduction to scholarly literature on sociology of translation, the chapter subsequently explores current research methods to finally focus on the trans-disciplinary potential of an analysis informed by cultural sociology, highlighting the need for a composite methodological approach that combines field and network analysis.

Before moving into the in-depth analysis outlined above, it is worth dwelling a moment on the term 'cultural sociology' used in the title of this chapter, and explaining how it differs from 'sociology of culture'. Despite them being used erroneously as interchangeable, the two terms have significantly distinctive meanings. This is not a redundant clarification: whilst the terms 'culture' and 'society' have informed studies in sociology of translation since their development (Wolf 2007: 2-6), the question of whether and how culture and society can (or cannot) be separated has been a matter for debate ever since Anthony Pym tried to differentiate between 'cultural' and 'social' factors, with the former being 'the ones that are observed', and the latter 'the ones used to explain the cultural factors' (2006: 14-15). Responding to a common criticism of the supposedly deterministic stance in sociological approaches, i.e. its rigidity in terms of predicting research outcomes, the distinction between the two terms will reveal the extent to which, and precisely *how*, a sociological investigation can offer insights for translation analysis.

In the second half of the twentieth century, many academic disciplines experienced a 'cultural turn'. Before this turn, sociological analyses tended to focus on the role of social agents and the sociological institutions that shaped cultural practices. Therefore, 'sociology of culture' interpreted cultural products as a reflection of the dynamics of society. To put it schematically

for the sake of this introduction, a cultural product in translation is seen as refracting exterior social structures, thus inducing the sociologists to centre their enquiry on either (public or private) social institutions or social categories (such as gender, class, race, etc). As remarked by Chaney (2012: 22), this implied that culture was perceived as rigidly imposed by these structures, but this representation of the relationship between culture and society could no longer properly reflect the de-industrialized and increasingly consumer- and leisure-based societies in the West (ibid.). Therefore, the 'cultural turn' prompted sociologists to shift the focus of their analysis to culture as a central component in understanding social practices. In other words, drawing on Griswold (2008), 'sociology of culture' involves understanding social influence on cultural formations, whilst 'cultural sociology' involves grasping cultural influences on social processes. For the discipline of Translation Studies, this means that if we acknowledge the social dimension of translation practice and process, our analysis should concern the role of 'culture', in terms of discourses and practices, as well as value systems, in translation. In this sense, cultural processes do not derive directly from social dynamics, but influence them.

Opening up to culture as a sociological topic also led to the questioning of cultural hierarchies and the expansion of sociological thinking so that it finally included popular culture. Recent trends, such as globalisation, have prompted a further re-conceptualisation of culture that extends beyond individual communities and includes reflections on transnational flows (Poster 2010: 48). For disciplines focused on cultural exchanges such as Translation Studies, this offers a promising basis for the study of translation not only in relation to the phenomena of globalisation and migration, but also in terms of rethinking translation history in relation to cultural movements across and beyond national boundaries. Similarly, the ongoing development of new media has modified not only the connections between local and global, but also the relationship between production and consumption, between (human) subjects and (non-human) objects (ibid., 47), with many implications for, amongst others, translation as a machine-assisted process.

Jacobs and Hanrahan (2005) outlined the pitfalls of an over-emphasis on cultural systems, one that might erase social differences, connected to status, gender, race, etc. They stressed the need for sociology to move beyond the cultural turn by rejecting 'cultural relativism that eviscerates critique and erodes the basis of social solidarity' (2005: 13). Their suggestion was to adopt an aesthetic conception of culture, which, in conjunction with objective models, could give voice to the subjectivity of experience. Nevertheless, to speak of 'aesthetic' may risk re-enacting elitist perception of cultural practices that pervaded the discipline before the cultural turn and does not seem to do justice to contemporary artistic usages, which are more open to popular culture. Also, the term 'aesthetic' is in danger of triggering a return to analyses focused on close reading. This is especially true for Translation Studies as a relatively young discipline that has long struggled to move away from text-bound approaches and artistic product-focused inquiries. Hence, on balance, the shift from 'sociology of culture' to 'cultural sociology' still

opens up flexible and dynamic lines of enquiry that could connect Translation Studies more productively not only with sociology but also with cultural studies.

Literature overview and theoretical concepts

Whilst the 'cultural turn' in sociology prompted the development of cultural sociology, some three decades later, in the early 2000s, the 'sociological turn' in Translation Studies saw the development of a new sub-discipline, that of 'sociology of translation', complementing the variety of linguistic and cultural approaches to translation. This section will offer an overview of the main contributions to this sub-field, outlining the strengths and limits of each perspective in order to provide the grounds for a reflection on a more productive interaction of these approaches.

As remarked by Pym (2006: 2), with the adoption of the concept of 'norms' (Toury 1995), Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) had already shown some interest in social factors. Yet, DTS analysis was still limited to the level of texts, whilst the fundamental effect of the 'sociological turn' has been the shift of scholarly interest from translations as textual artefacts to the agents involved in the process of translation, most notably translators, and their context. Arguably, as outlined in the introductory section, the interrelation between cultural and social systems is much more ingrained, with social practices being shaped by cultural discourses and values. Beyond focusing on social mediators, the sociological turn allows more broadly for translation scholars to not only adopt sociological methodologies but to also unlock the potential of multi-layered inquiries in the study of culture by connecting translators' activities to the dynamics of social, political and cultural life, and thus increasing awareness of the role and function of translation in society. For this reason, a sociological approach to the study of translation means exploring translation as a social, and ultimately, cultural practice.

The sociological turn was facilitated first by Daniel Simeoni (1998), who envisaged looking at the translators' dispositions and skills – the 'translatorial habitus' – as a way of bridging Toury's norms and translators' practices. Simeoni shifted the focus beyond DTS; nevertheless, he claimed that the key feature of the habitus was subservience to translational norms, which risked crystallising the notion of habitus in rigid terms. Despite this debatable assumption, Simeoni's move towards the concept of habitus, which was inspired by the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, already marked a significant trend in sociology of translation. Bourdieu's theoretical framework has proved very influential and has prompted sociological accounts of translation spanning several genres, firstly in the domain of novels (Gouanvic 1999), and then – amongst others – theatre (Hanna 2016), poetry (Blakesley 2018), philosophy (Charlston 2018), academic textbooks (Buzelin 2014) and manga (Brienza 2016). The interest in sociological paradigms, largely but not solely inspired by Bourdieu, has led to the publication of a number of key texts in the area of sociology of translation, notably: Inghilleri (2005), Wolf and Fukari (2007), and Tyulenev (2014). Whilst Inghilleri focuses primarily (but not exclusively) on the use of Bourdieu's conceptual tools in Translation Studies, the other

scholars develop this inquiry by providing insights in the application of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), and Social System Theory, all of which will be discussed in detail below. The application of Bourdieu's cultural sociology, and particularly the combined use of his conceptual tools, such as habitus, field, and symbolic capital, enable scholars to undertake a more productive relational analysis of the translation process, in order to fully grasp how the dynamics of cultural production relate to socio-cultural factors. By defining habitus as a 'system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' (Bourdieu 1990: 53; also in Swartz 1997: 100-1), Bourdieu not only challenged the more traditional dichotomy between subject and object by seeing habitus as a mediating element, but also offered, in principle, a more flexible application of the concept of habitus to the analysis of social practices. One of the key factors of habitus lies in the double effect that the process of socialisation has on agents as they are simultaneously influencing and influenced by the social structures. More interestingly, the nature of these 'dispositions' – whether cognitive or corporal – is considered to be unconscious, thus avoiding a deterministic reading of the agents' practices.

The notion of field is intended as a historical, *relatively* autonomous social arena, structured by power relationships. It is a site of negotiation between different capitals (economic, cultural, social, and more crucially symbolic, as source of honour and prestige) which various agents struggle to accrue as they try to gain a dominant position within the field itself. This notion captures the fluid character of the dynamics between agents, whereby negotiations take place when newcomers try to access the field and challenge its boundaries by adopting specific practices, which are normally heterodox, as opposed to orthodox and dominant, although this is not unproblematic (Sela-Sheffy 2005). These negotiations are also described by Bourdieu as 'position-takings', which sociologists must endeavour to identify. Firmly rooted within the domain of cultural production, the process of translation is prone to this kind of relational analysis, whereby the several agents – including authors and translators, as well as editors, publishers, and reviewers – constantly interact and position themselves in the publishing field according to their values, perceptions, and social trajectories – i.e. their habitus – in the search for a more dominant position.

While Bourdieu's theory offers a sound methodological approach to the study of translation as cultural and social practice, his ideas have nonetheless been challenged and contested, particularly in relation to the fluid notion of habitus and its supposedly deterministic stance. Translation scholars have critically engaged with the concept, and gauged the usefulness of applying it in conjunction with the full set of Bourdieusian notions and other theoretical approaches in Translation Studies and sociology (Vorderobermeier 2014a). The brief discussion of other sociological frameworks which follows allows us to assess the potential of interweaving them with the Bourdieusian paradigms. One of Bourdieu's fiercest critics is French sociologist Bernard Lahire, who disagrees with the idea of the singularity of a habitus as well as that of the autonomy of a field. Lahire (2003) has suggested a 'pluralistic' approach

to the concept of habitus, one which scales down the universalistic dimension that he sees as embedded in Bourdieu's notion by prompting sociological research of the micro-level of individuals. This research captures the wide-ranging, heterogeneous, and even contradictory set of dispositions possessed by each agent. Lahire posits that these dispositions become active depending on specific contextual circumstances, for each individual shapes their habitus in various professional contexts and through plural social experiences which include belonging to several fields. Focusing on the plural dispositions of the agent can represent a particularly insightful approach to the analysis of translation strategies. For instance, when literary translators perform other roles alongside that of translators, such as authors, editors and/or reviewers, they can adopt different translation methods also depending on the degree of their multi-professionalism in specific contexts. However, as noted by Wolf and Fukari (2007: 23), the underlying risk of Lahire's approach is an excessively strict focus on individual subjectivity, one which may neglect the specific social context where these individuals perform their roles, and the negotiations that they need to undertake with other agents, thus obscuring the actual circumstances where the process of translation takes place.

Moving beyond Bourdieu's field theory, Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) has received some attention lately, both as a methodological approach to the empirical process of translation, and in relation to the theoretical discussion on the hybridity of the process of translation (Buzelin 2013: 189). Developed within science and technology studies, ANT relies on an ethnographic model that privileges an empirical attention to detail, and maintains that human as well as nonhuman actors share information and connect with one another in a network. This emphasis on both researchers' observation and connectivity between actors is partly at odds with Bourdieu's theory of social structure, but can unlock opportunities for alternative relational approaches. Latour uses the theoretical paradigm of 'translation' to suggest that elements do not simply move but are altered in their transmission from one actor to another. This implies a degree of heterogeneity and unpredictability in the transformation that contrasts with the more rigid interpretation of Bourdieu's power dynamics. Crucially, Latour challenges ontologically the dichotomy between humans and nonhumans by maintaining that '*any thing* that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor'; this does not mean that objects – i.e. texts – cause actions, but they enable connections and trigger human responses, thus acting either as intermediaries or as mediators of social activity (Latour 2005: 71). Drawing on Latour, Hélène Buzelin (2005) has convincingly argued that we should analyse the network of interactions between the translator and the other agents involved in the translation process, ranging from the foreign author, to the editor, publisher and reviewer, as well as the target reader and the translated text itself. The result is an approach that makes sense of the contingencies of the translation process and re-evaluates the role of texts in a sociological analysis.

Whilst the application of Latour's paradigms calls for a microstructural approach that observes the interactions between (non)human individuals, both Hermans (1999) and Tyulenev (2009),

inspired by Luhmann's theory of social systems (SST), have instead suggested that we conceive of translation itself as a system. German sociologist Niklas Luhmann theorised that, alongside the biological and psychic systems, there exists a closed, self-reproducing social system that is comprised of communication events. Intriguingly, human actors are not actually part of the social system, but lie instead at the intersections of these three systems (biological, psychic, social). Our society can be seen as a communication system which includes several sub-systems ranging from politics and economics, to religion, arts and media. Tyulenev (2013) proposes that translation itself can be seen firstly as a social system, one which is not based on communication but on mediation; secondly as a sub-system (of, for instance, the literary or political system) which is relatively autonomous, like Bourdieu's field; and thirdly as the boundary phenomenon of a system, meaning that translation separates as well as connects, or decodes and re-codes, the system with its environment (Tyulenev 2009: 259). Buzelin and Baraldi (2016: 123) expand on the controversial lack of participation of human individuals in the production or control of the system, noting that if it is true that the SST does not stress individual participation, it nonetheless acknowledges that this is influenced by and can influence communicative systems. Conscious that Luhmann's theories can require some flexibility in their application due to their synchronic and Western-oriented focus (Tyulenev 2009: 161), Tyulenev (2014: 192-4) proposes a combination of micro- and macro-sociological approaches that makes sense of the relationship between agency and system and the interaction of human and non-human.

Tyulenev's argument in favour of combining complementary sociological approaches is particularly important. Nevertheless, I would argue that we should include a wider range of theoretical frameworks, beyond the currently popular triad of Bourdieu-Latour-Luhmann. Very little attention has been paid so far in Translation Studies to Social Network Analysis (SNA) which identifies patterns of relationships within social structures. As noted by Folaron and Buzelin (2007), who were amongst the first to discuss network analysis in relation to Translation Studies, SNA developed in response to a perceived overreliance on structuralist approaches in the social sciences in order to highlight the significance of individual actors' contingent social trajectories. With its anthropological and ethnographic perspective, SNA makes it possible to map social connections which reveal the interconnectedness of agents and actions. Pym (2007) outlined the significance of network analysis for Translation Studies in the way it allows us to understand the complex configuration of the social space occupied by individual agents over time: when, where, and with whom they operate and connect. More broadly, the detailed analysis of social links among agents can provide a more nuanced, and less static, reading not only of agents' social capital, but also of their cultural practices. Drawing on technological aids and sophisticated mathematic practices, network analysis also provides researchers with a refined toolset with which to map small to large social organisations and institutions. This seems particularly apt given the current widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICT) that increases the possibilities of dynamic social interactions, also between professional and non-professional agents, as in the case of volunteer

translation activities (Folaron 2010). It also suggests that further reflection is needed on the complementarity and adaptability of available research methods. The following section will provide a brief overview of some of the main research methods currently in use.

Main research methods

Advancing the need for a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, this section will first examine the value of quantitative methods such as translation surveys and social network graphs, as well as of qualitative methods, such as translation interviews and analyses of correspondence and translation drafts. Nevertheless, the interplay between these methods is subtle and prone to bias as both require the gathering of extensive data and can potentially need training in IT tools, or ethnographic methodology; an opportunity which is not always available, feasible or sought.

Quantitative methods are useful to understand the significance of translation phenomena at a macro-level. Translation surveys are tactical in data collection and statistical research, and generally cost-effective if these surveys are already available on a large scale. They nonetheless involve risks such as missing data, presentation bias and errors. While statistical sources are rarely wholly accurate, researchers should nonetheless check that the available sets of data present no obvious omissions, and acknowledge any limitations. Benmessaoud and Buzelin (2018: 170), for instance, have raised concerns over the consistency of one of the most popular translation databases, the UNESCO *Index Translationum*, a thematically organised inventory consisting of a couple of million translation entries. The *Index*, which was digitised in 1979 and updated fairly consistently until 2008, has become increasingly less useful since then due to irregular updates and a diminishing number of entries. Sapiro (2008: 47-51) notes that the quality of the *Index* depends on the varying reliability of the bibliographies of national libraries, and its data may need to be complemented or cross-checked with other sources, such as national repositories, as suggested by Blakesley (2016: 15), or publisher's catalogues. Independent researchers can also create their own databases by means of either surveys or open/closed questionnaires, but these methods are heavily dependent on the availability of suitable data. Economic data on distribution and print-runs of translations would also be of great interest for sociological, as well as historical, accounts of translation practices, yet they are normally hard to find or difficult to compile, and the unavailability of data can lead to inaccuracies and/or bias in the dataset.

Social network graphs make it possible not only to visualise hard data in an effective way, but also to map the structure of social connections and reveal key players. Bottero and Crossley (2011: 108), for example, use these tools to show the cohesive, yet complex, network of agents from which the 'deviant' early punk network emerged in London in the mid-1970s. Vertices were used to represent actors, whereas lines represented their social connections: their number and distance indicated proportionally the cohesion and density/stability of the network. Social network graphs can also be organised around nodes, connected into dyads (the smallest

network) or triads, and interconnected into 'cliques', and they can trace the centrality of co-occurrent actors, as well as that of 'brokers' (those who enable, or control, the connection). They are highly complex analytical tools that also rely on the use of specialised ICT programmes, such as Gephi, NodeL or Pajek, and are based on a variety of algorithms, which enhances the data accuracy but also requires specific expertise in data management.

Qualitative methods, on the other hand, make it possible to gain closer insight into micro-practices and dispositions; the bias of the subjective information is counter-balanced by the richness of the accounts which produce narratives and discourses that extend beyond immediate translation practice. Translation interviews are one of the most common qualitative methods, and have been used extensively since the late 1990s. More recently, they have been also been used in conjunction with focus groups (Koskinen 2008). In the context of sociology of translation, interviews not only enable a more in-depth study due to their interactive nature, their thematic flexibility (topic-centred or biographical/narrative), and their contextual character (Mason 2002: 62), but they also allow scholars to interact with the specific social contexts under investigation and gain a better understanding of the power relationships that exist there. Translation interviews can have an ethnographic perspective, whereby the researcher spends time in the field of study (i.e. a translation company or a publishing house), exploring, experiencing, interacting and observing its social settings in order to fully document them, also in terms of its non-verbal practices. The co-construction of knowledge, where researchers engage with the individual actors, can also complement or further clarify data. In this respect, the interview design is critical for the interviewer, not only in terms of choosing the interview structure (structured, semi-structured, or unstructured/focused), but especially in terms of their relationship with the interviewee. These relationships can also be influenced by contextual factors such as the interview setting, the use of technological tools, as well as power and emotional dynamics, which can prompt ethical considerations, such as whether translation agents enjoy a more or less privileged status.

Vorderobermeier (2014b: 18-19) also points out the need for researchers to grasp the fluid nature of biographical accounts, in this case of translators. Drawing on Bourdieu, the scholar warns of the 'biographical illusion' of constructing linear and unambiguous biographies, by simply eliciting anecdotal details. These do not acknowledge that translators 'socially age', and develop different, even contradictory, dispositions, in relation to the specific contingencies of the field where they operate at a certain time. In other words, translators' biographical details need to be contextualised within their social trajectories, before connecting them more rigorously to other data. When looking at both translation processes and products, data collection can also include the analysis of archival records, minutes, and correspondence, as well as translator working papers, manuscripts, and other 'mediated testimonies' (Munday 2014: 68). The validity of translation papers has already been recognised from a micro-historical perspective, insofar as they represent a valuable resource for investigating translators' working practices as well as their relationships with other agents (ibid.). They can

also be included systematically in cultural sociology-informed investigations, as Buzelin (2007) did in her ethnographic observation of the 'making' of literary translations within some Canadian publishing houses. Drawing on ANT's paradigm of hybridity sketched in the previous section, translation drafts can be considered as 'actors' as they trigger responses on the part of the translators, reviewers and publishers. Their inclusion in the network which produced the final versions enabled Buzelin to provide micro-insights into the genesis of the translation product, from the acquisition of publishing rights to the marketing of the final version, thus offering a fuller account of the entire translation process. SNA analysis of the correspondence between translation agents can provide insights into translation connections, but a more in-depth qualitative investigation of this data using a narrative theory model inspired by social theory (Baker 2006) can reveal the cultural dynamics that affect the field being studied. The notion of 'narrative', seen in sociological terms as 'a meta-code' rather than, as in narratology or linguistics, an individual text (ibid., 9), helps to look at how various sources (i.e. texts, paratexts, agents' correspondence) contribute to the elaboration of broader sets of narratives in society (ibid., 3-4), and to the shaping of values and conceptions. This enables us to illuminate the individual and collective (counter) narratives produced and framed by agents in their accounts, thus shedding light on the identity and power constructions taking place in social spaces.

As Tyluenev (2014, 102-4) reminds us, quantitative and qualitative methods are not mutually exclusive but mutually enriching, whereby data collection and interpretation are intrinsically connected, and sometimes overlapping in terms of research procedures. In research practice, not only are qualitative and quantitative methods often combined, but they are also frequently triangulated in order to obtain the most accurate picture possible.

Critical issues and topics

However useful hard data can be, it cannot fully reveal the nature and degree of any *relational* ties. Such data should, therefore, be read from within overarching theoretical frameworks that can interpret them more meaningfully. Equally, it is important to avoid the risk of defining textual production solely on the basis of agents' relational power dynamics. In this sense, ANT and SNA prove helpful in preventing a deterministic stance, revealing instead the multiplicity of the interactions involved in translation practice. Simultaneously, we need to acknowledge the validity of the argument that although sociologically informed Translation Studies can reveal the contexts of translation, they clearly focus less on the texts. Still a contested topic, the text-context relationship can be the focus of attention by cultural sociology-informed studies when translations, seen as products rather than processes, are included in their investigation. This section will explore in more depth the benefits and pitfalls of combining research methods in three areas of investigation, such as publishing and world literature, the history of translators, and online translation. It does not aim to be exhaustive, but provides a relatively varied picture of the interaction between diverse theoretical approaches and methodologies discussed above at the level of institutions, agents, and medium.

Over the past two decades, sociologists as well as translation scholars have investigated the field of cultural production, exploring patterns of text selection and distribution, and focusing almost exclusively on literary production. The dominant theoretical framework has been that of Bourdieu, whose field theory explored the tensions between small- or large-scale spheres, unveiling the non-economic forces behind translation processes. Translation – conceived here in its broadest sense as cultural exchange – can, as Heilbron and Sapiro (2002) suggest, be a means of legitimation, in so far as it can contribute to the positioning of editors in their own literary fields. From a global perspective, it can be seen as a way of acquiring symbolic capital in a struggle between dominant and dominating world literary traditions (Casanova 2003). Drawing on the *Index Translationum*, Heilbron (1999) examines international translation flows, and categorises languages as either hyper-central, central, semi-peripheral, or peripheral, depending on the number of books translated from and into that language. The use of translation surveys, and the application of the Bourdieusian paradigm has enabled researchers to provide a broader overview of translation exchanges that not only illuminates selection and reception patterns on a global scale, but also reveals inequalities and asymmetrical power relations. However, this approach does not fully acknowledge the textual dimension, with the consequent risk of missing cultural subtleties related to texts and authors and undermining the validity of the whole approach, as Prendergrast (2004) has outlined in reference to Casanova's analysis of Kafka. Combining Bourdieu's paradigms with ANT, Buzelin (2014) reaffirms the need to analyse the 'narrative, material and sometimes iconographic qualities' (ibid., 329) of the books, in order to better grasp the reasons why the source texts were selected. In fact, her sociological reading of the paratextual features of French translations of American academic textbooks reveals that illustrations or 'hybrid' pedagogical materials (i.e. for experts but also accessible to mainstream readerships) can facilitate the translation of textbooks, depending on the structural rigidity of the academic field in the target culture.

With respect to the current challenges of globalisation, Meylaerts (2008) has warned of the strictly national application of Bourdieu's method. The habitus is situated, it would seem, within the sole boundaries of national history and politico-cultural dynamics in national societies, while translators work across two cultures, which can co-exist, or struggle, within the same space. This is evident particularly in multilingual contexts, such as Belgium, where French and Dutch receive very different levels of recognition in the social sphere, triggering strategies of submission or resistance on the part of bilingual translators. In this sense, the adoption of a methodological perspective informed by social network analysis could provide stimulating insights into transnational networks, revealing key translation communities and agents, and their power relationships in intercultural exchanges. Field analysis could facilitate a better understanding of the role of translation in resisting social struggles at national and transnational level, as in the case of manga publishing in the US, in which translators and editors find professional recognition in the domestication of Japanese texts, and re-articulate global power imbalances in their relationship with their Japanese counterparts (Brienza 2016: 132-35).

Moving beyond the mechanisms of translation publishing, the concept of habitus has become central in the history of translators insofar as it helps to interpret the interplay between translators' cultural dispositions and the social space in which they act. Quantitative as well as qualitative methods, such as translation surveys and interviews, contribute to the mapping of this habitus, both from a synchronic and diachronic perspective, and provide a basis for analysing translation strategies. However, there is a risk in these approaches focusing too strictly on the translators' perspectives, which can lead to an aesthetics-driven account of their agendas, and an underestimation of the textual dimension. In this respect, it is worth noting that not all Bourdieusian concepts have been applied in Translation Studies to the same extent as the concept of habitus, but they can still help to solve the issues sketched above.

One of the most neglected of Bourdieu's concepts is that of *illusio*, the belief on the part of agents, and especially newcomers, that it is worth getting involved in the rules of the 'game'. This concept, which plays a key role in enabling the dynamics of the field to function, is particularly useful in de-bunking the misconception that agents are entirely indifferent to interests and gains, and it helps to explain the fact that translators invest in an often financially insecure profession. This further adds to the reflection produced both on a macro- and micro-level. On the macro-level it questions of the professionalisation of agents, and on the micro-level aspects of practitioners' struggle for status and search for identity (Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger 2011). It is also relevant to the discussion on social agency and activism (Angelelli 2014), notably for those agents who enter the domain of cultural exchange in times of increased social mobility.

Hexis is another concept that has received very little attention (the exceptions being Charlston 2013; 2018, in relation to philosophical texts, and Pasmatzi 2014 in relation to literary texts). This term is conceived as the embodied enactment of social stances in pursuit of prestige (as opposed to the cognitive character of the habitus). As suggested by Charlston (2013: 55) in his definition of translatorial *hexis* as a 'defiant, honour-seeking attitude of the philosopher-translator with regard to specific oppositions in the surrounding field', translation elements and gestures (i.e. lexical patterns) are bearers of social distinction and engrain the translator's participation in the field's dynamics. For example, the philosopher J. B. Baille's intensified use of metaphors of height and transcendent aspects in his translation of Hegel's texts allowed him to connect Hegel with Christian orthodoxy, thus taking a position within the field of British Idealist philosophers (ibid., 65-66). Charlston's use of *hexis* is particularly intriguing in the way it shifts the focus of translation research, as it prompts a microscopic analysis that brings the translated text back to the fore.

A further risk is that of imposing an excessively strict sociological and perceptibly deterministic reading of these strategies, which can be mitigated by the adoption of SNA analytical tools in order to gauge the vast array of relationships, also prompted by empirical contingencies. This is particularly useful when discussing composite work environments, such as international organisations, collaborative translation projects, as well as large publishing

house or periodicals. The need to place translators within the social and cultural context in which translations are produced and received, and to understand their roles in relation to other cultural agents is widely acknowledged in translation history. This is highlighted in Pym's (1998) proposal of 'transfer maps' that can trace movements of both people and texts over space and time. However, since SNA is based on data collected by means of questionnaires, interviews, and archival materials, it represents a more refined methodological approach with which to observe concrete interactions which are integral to social positioning, as Bottero and Crossley's (2011) analysis of the punk network in London showed.

The use of network analysis is particularly productive when dealing with online translation networks, where agents collaborate through less formal interactions via online platforms (McDonough Dolmaya 2018: 352), as well as via mailing lists where they interact and exchange advice, whilst building a sense of professional community. In blogs and social media, in particular, agents share their cultural values and use discussions to enhance their visibility, thus shaping their social influence both in relation to other translators (whether professional or volunteer/amateur) and in connection with professional bodies (such as translation companies) and translation clients. As Risku, Rogle and Pein-Weber (2016) have shown in their research on online amateur translation platforms, the high level of complexity and dynamism of the social interconnections calls for a polymorphous representation of social positions, which does not see 'centrality' as the most desirable position, since translators may prefer to occupy peripheral positions and concentrate on specific contacts only. This exposes the risks of using SNA in isolation: while it can help to visualise the spatial position of connections, it does not provide a more systemic reading of interconnections that could shed light on power dynamics. That said, the concept of social network offers the complementary possibility of making sense of the plurality of connections that inform strategies and practices of translation within the field of cultural production but also, crucially, beyond professional boundaries.

Recommendations for research practice

The application of sociological methods to the study of translation therefore requires careful consideration. As recently outlined by Buzelin and Baraldi (2016: 118-20), whilst the field of Translation Studies has borrowed extensively from sociology, the field of sociology has shown little interest in translation. This may hamper a full interdisciplinary exchange, and Translation Studies runs the risk of selectively adopting a single sociological approach, as the focus on Bourdieu's theoretical concepts in the last decades suggests. At the same time, a cross-disciplinary approach requires a firm grasp of the sociological theories involved, which generally lie outside the main disciplinary boundaries of Translation Studies, together with an ability to connect them with the diverse paradigms of one's own discipline. The necessity of triangulating research methods is also of paramount importance for the academic rigour of the translation analysis.

Chartier (Bourdieu and Chartier 2015: xviii) notes that Bourdieu harshly criticized the discipline of history (or French history, at least) for its 'rejection of any critical reflexivity […] and the preference it gives to futile epistemological discussions at the expense of research practices that are in fact the genuine site of theoretical reflection'. If we apply Bourdieu's reflections to Translation Studies, and use his own words, we can argue that it is not possible to compare the status of translation from a certain period onwards 'without being clear that the notion of [a translator] is a historical construct that has constantly changed. It is the very category with which the historic object is constructed that should be the object of a historical analysis' (ibid., 11). In terms of research practice, this means that Translation Studies scholars should not only avoid anachronisms in terms of research content and to put translation within an historical perspective, but also analyse, within the specific historical framework, the methods and tools of the discipline, their potentialities and limitations. This ultimately highlights the need for a self-reflexive approach that can adapt relevant sociological theories to the object of research. This search for self-reflexivity is also advocated by Hanna (2016: 205-6), especially in terms of discussing the criteria for selecting materials, genres and periodisations.

As a case in point, the example of analyses of translation publishing strategies effectively interconnects diverse sociological approaches and research methods, thus showing the cross-disciplinary interplay between cultural analysis, history and sociology. Both the quantitative and qualitative methods previously discussed can be combined for a more comprehensive data gathering, in terms of translation publications as well as sociological narratives shaped in such primary sources as publishing correspondence, translation drafts or other archival materials. Researchers should nonetheless be mindful of such issues as the scarce availability of data, errors and omissions. The interpretation of these primary sources through Bourdieu's field theory allows researchers to analyse the power dynamics of the agents involved in the cultural process, such as foreign producers, publishers, translators, and critics, and their relationships with the broader cultural spaces in the source and target contexts. SNA contributes to the mapping of these social connections, but also outlines how (trans)national social interactions may influence how and why a text is translated, thus revealing the empirical contingencies of text production. These sociological results also show the historical transformation of the agents' habitus and dispositions, thus also contributing to a cultural historical account of translation practices, seen as social *and* cultural.

In conclusion, this chapter does not claim to provide an exhaustive overview of the composite sociological approaches found in all research domains of Translation Studies. Notably, sociological approaches to research on translation as a profession have not been discussed in depth, nor has the interplay between cultural sociology and audiovisual studies. Online environments have been briefly discussed, but, as McDonough Dolmaya (2018: 357) stresses, in this area non-professional translation and the role of technology are likely to become prominent issues in the near future, also in relation to political stances and activism. I have

tried nonetheless to elaborate a methodological reflection that could be of use beyond the literary fields. By acknowledging the role of the text (not just literary texts, but also others, such as translation drafts, and publishing correspondence) within the context, and prompting researchers' self-reflective practices, a cultural sociology-informed approach (or cluster of approaches, as outlined throughout this chapter) can prove insightful in revealing not simply how translation shapes and is shaped by social factors, but also how these social factors are ultimately deeply embedded in cultural practices.

Further reading

Inghilleri, Moira (ed.) (2005) *Bourdieu and the Sociology of Translation and Interpreting*. Special Issue of *The Translator* 11(2).

This special issue introduces readers to the use of Bourdieu's core concepts and their influence on Translation and Interpreting studies. It extends beyond a literary focus, with articles on legal translation, sign language interpreting as well as community interpreting. The article by Hélène Buzelin discusses how Latour's Actor-Network Theory may complement Bourdieu's theory.

Wolf, Michaela, and Alexandra Fukari (eds) (2007) *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins.

Symbolic of the emergence of the sub-field of 'sociology of translation', this collection of essays centres on the idea of translation as social practice. It offers contributions informed by socio-constructivist approaches, covering Bourdieu, Luhmann, and Latour.

Vorderobermeier, Gisella M. (ed.) (2014) *Remapping Habitus in Translation Studies*. Amsterdam & New York, Rodopi.

This edited volume re-assesses the use of the Bourdieusian concept of habitus in Translation Studies, and reflects on its application to empirical research through a diverse array of case studies.

Hanna, Sameh (2016) *Bourdieu in Translation Studies. The Socio-cultural Dynamics of Shakespeare Translation in Egypt*. London, Routledge.

This monograph offers a sound application of Bourdieu's sociological framework to empirical research in terms of drama translation. It also provides a comprehensive overview of Bourdieu's conceptual tools and stimulating insights into a 'relational methodology' for sociological studies of translation.

Swartz, David (1997) *Culture and Power: the Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

This book provides a clear and concise introduction to Bourdieu's main conceptual tools – field, habitus, capital –, and situates the discussion within theoretical debates in Sociology as well as within Bourdieu's cultural and intellectual context.

Latour, Bruno (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

This is a useful guide to understand how Actor-Network Theory can be used to study the social. Latour explores the five main controversies, or sources of uncertainty, about the social world, including the status of groups and facts, the notion of agency, the role of objects, and the writing of research accounts.

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