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How can I help? An archetype-based approach to community interpreters' solidarity

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Abstract: Considering different archetypes —i.e., collective identity representations— helps to discern the multiple ways in which community and public service interpreters are compelled to be of help. I argue that archetypes are a useful analytical tool for interpreters: It allows them to name competing rationales for solidarity; it helps them identify underlying personal motivations that might otherwise remain unconscious; and it permits a conscious decision-making process for the search of ethical courses of action when faced with dilemmas. Conscious decision-making warrants coherent practice that aligns with high professional standards supporting the communicative autonomy of the parties to an interaction. In this article, I present both the model for this archetype-based approach to interpreters' professional role as well as the analysis of three interpreters' narrative accounts of their perceptions of role, solidarity, and the model proposed. This input from the field yields rich insights, illustrates the analytical power of the archetypes proposed, and suggests that an expansion of their list might be in order.

Keywords: community interpreting, public service interpreting, solidarity, communicative autonomy, advocacy, mediation, interpreter role, ethical dilemmas

1. Introduction

Long-term commitment to interpreting in public services and community settings often stems from a sense of duty and a desire to give back. In other words: solidarity is often the driving force behind an essential, yet emotionally taxing and often underpaid (if at all) activity. Relatedly, the perpetual debate on the role of the interpreter is easily tied to conceptions of solidarity.

The goal of this paper is twofold. It is a dialogue between conceptual tools and tangible experiences. For the first goal, I present and discuss a model that identifies, typifies, and supports conscious decision-making around diverse solidarity actions by interpreters. The essence of this model rests on two (dichotomous) archetypal representations and draws on philosophical conceptualizations of solidarity. To set the dialogue forth, such archetypal symbols are presented for discussion to professionally employed interpreters. For the second goal, I analyze their narrations —their own experiences as well as their analysis of hypothetical situations— through the lens of the model's archetypal representations. This dialogue between theory and practice provides one documented approach to the different dimensions of community interpreting as a helping profession. What ensues is an illustration of the complexity of interpreters' solidarity as well as the relevance of naming the

different layers of such solidarity to gain coherence and further the professionalization of the field.

2. Elements of the model

In interpreting in community and public service settings, degrees of involvement by the third (mediating) person are critical to the discussion of the conceptualization of the interpreter's role – that is, the interpreter's occupational scope of action (cf. Goffman 1974, p. 129, cited by Skaaden, 2019). For example, professional associations and public institutions warn against relying on family members to serve as liaison because they are too close to one of the parties to maintain an uninvolved perspective (see for example Western Sydney Local Health District, 2023, for institutional guidelines; or Seidelman and Bachner, 2010, and Rosenberg et al., 2007 for documented studies), hence the recommendation to resort to professional interpreters whenever possible. However, professional interpreters cannot pretend to (though they can aspire to) be completely uninvolved because their mere presence has been proven to have an impact on the course of events (see Wadesnjö and Gavioli, 2023). The following normative questions arise, with consequential deontological implications: as a third person in an exchange that the interpreter is helping facilitate, how third, or how uninvolved should the interpreter remain? And for what reasons? In this section, I present a model with a goal to help address these questions—both for the sake of scholar inquiry and for the sake of professional guidance for novice and experienced interpreters alike. The concept of solidarity and its relation to the role of the interpreter is one of the conceptual tools of the model.

2.1. Solidarity and role

One possible definition of solidarity is as follows: "a readiness to act and/or to make sacrifices" (Bayertz, 1999, p. 3) based on a sense of obligation towards a fellow individual. A definitive definition is elusive (Sangiovanni and Viehoff, 2023) and a thorough discussion of why that is the case is beyond the scope of this article. However, certain philosophers distinguish between the concept of *solidarity among* and that of *solidarity with* (O'Neill, 1996 p. 201; Miller, 2017 p. 62 cited in Sangiovanni and Viehoff, 2023). This distinction is helpful for our analysis: it helps depict the different (and sometimes dichotomous) helping ways interpreters are compelled to take on.

Solidarity among involves a sense of obligation that stems from an experience of common ground with members of a shared community. *Solidarity with*, on the other hand, refers to forms of aid and support that are provided by individuals that are not part of the group requiring aid or support. For example, sending donations to an organization that delivers food to a region that has been hit by a natural disaster is an act of *solidarity with* a community that is facing difficulty. Supporting a fellow worker's request for improved safety at the workplace is an act of *solidarity among* people who share similar conditions.

The rich and ongoing discussion on the interpreter's role in public service and community settings —from early times by Anderson in 1976 to most recently Wadesnjö and Gavioli (2023) the conversation has been rich and relentless— is partly fed by the fact that this branch of the profession is tightly related to a sense of social responsibility. Uniquely, in public service and community settings, lifting the language barrier is both an act of service to all the parties in the communicative event indistinctly (to service providers and service users alike), and an act of support to vulnerable populations specifically:

those who have a limited command of the societal languages —typically, migrant service users— often face power imbalances when interacting with the new societal structures in which they find themselves immersed (Wadensjö, 2009; Kalina, 2015). It is often an inclination to "help" or "give back to the community" by migrants who are established in their receiving societies that attracts interpreters to this profession (Garcia-Beyaert, 2016, p. 116).

How to give back as an interpreter, or equivalently, how to define the role, is a highly debated topic in the literature and the industry alike, partly because the variety of demands on mediating interpreters is ample and such demands are sometimes irreconcilable. When helping to overcome language barriers, how can the interpreter use their own judgement and at the same time ensure noninterference? How can the interpreter help with cultural insights and avoid transmitting cultural assumptions? How can the interpreter show trust-worthy impartiality while tending to social justice concerns? These practical questions point to the complexity of the task.

The act of mediating through language barriers takes, in fact, different forms. Okoniewska (2022) notes the existence of "constructive disagreement" (p. 141) among contributors to the special issue of *The Translator* on "Interpreters' roles in a changing environment". Indeed, different authors, regions, fields of specialization, and professional organizations conceptualize interpreters' mediation and role differently. For instance, cultural mediators and public service interpreters are often treated as interchangeable professional figures in Italy (Gavioli and Baraldi, 2011) while, in Australia, interpreters are expected to restrain their input to message transfer functions and avoid "guidance or advice" (Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators, 2012, p.5-6), which are expected actions from cultural mediators. In the United States, whereas in healthcare settings the interpreter is expected to facilitate communication beyond message transfer by taking on the roles of "message clarifier" and "cultural clarifier" (California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters, 2002) and by "[preventing] harm to the parties that the interpreter serves" (National Council on Interpreting in Health Care, 2005, p.10), court interpreters are to avoid being "active participants" and they ought to stick to "their role as an impartial conduit" (Administrative Office of the Courts, 2020). Contextual variety defines the field. As attested by the mere existence of codes of ethics across fields and regions there is consensus, however, on the need to establish boundaries to the scope of the interpreter's actions. With the visual support of Figure 1, I present one way of conceptualizing the interpreter's mediating role and of reconciling its necessary limitations for contexts in which the agency of the parties is deemed worth preserving.

The agency of the interpreter, also referred to by Skaaden (2019, p. 709) as the interpreter's "exercise of discretion", is effectively depicted in the literature as "rather controversial" (Gavioli and Baraldi, 2021, p. 174). Here, the interpreter's agency is conceptualized as being at the service of the agency of the parties that receive interpreting services. This is because "the communicative autonomy of the parties that the interpreter is there to serve" is the "essence of the interpreter's contribution in community settings" (Garcia-Beyaert, 2021, p. 2 and 3). That is, the goal is for the parties to be in control of their communicative process, and the interpreter seeks to avoid, to the extent possible, interfering with this process. It aligns with the recurring ethical tenet of impartiality. It also aligns with Hale's recommended approach to role, one that supports "the speakers' rights to express whatever they want in whatever way they want or are able to, but also […] the speakers ['requirement] to take responsibility for the consequences of their utterances" (2008, p. 115).

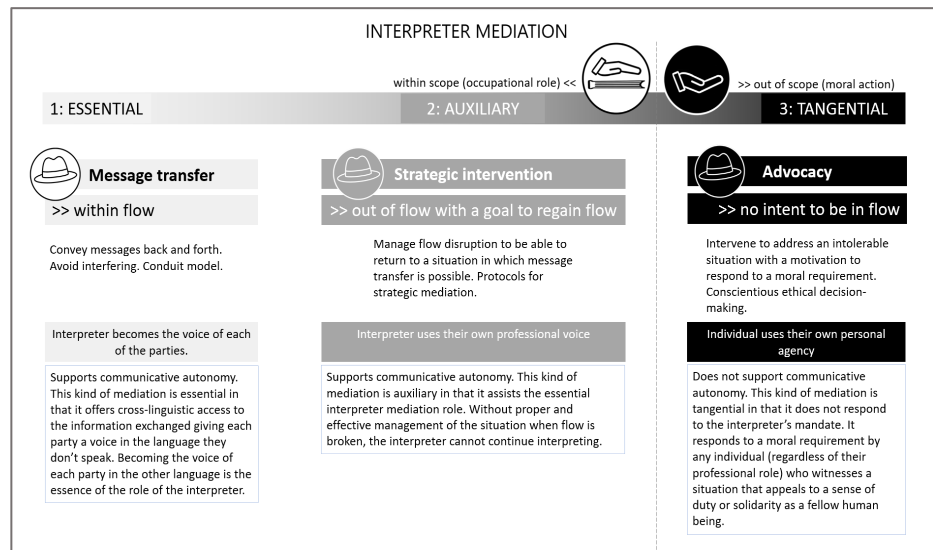

Figure 1: Characterization of interpreter mediation roles when the goal is supporting the communicative autonomy of the parties.

Access by all parties to all content in the exchange is essential for the above aspirations, hence the centrality of (accurate) message transfer as an overarching aspirational reference. The concept of 'flow' is pivotal. It refers to the uninterrupted (albeit mediated) exchange of messages by the parties in the communicative event. Flow might be broken at any time by myriad circumstances. From a need for clarification by the interpreter, to an impairing cultural misunderstanding among parties, to strictly environmental impediments that prevent the interpreter from doing their job; in many cases interpreters need to use their own voice, thus breaking the flow. "Strategic mediation" (Bancroft, 2015) offers a method for doing so swiftly. Here, when the interpreter uses their voice to address a source of broken flow, with a goal to regain flow, we call it "strategic intervention". Finally, in this model, when there is no longer an intent to retain or regain flow, the mediation is conceived of as tangential to the mandate of the interpreter. That is, advocacy (addressed in more detail in 2.2) is out of scope, outside the interpreter's occupational role.

Column 1 and column 2 in Figure 1 above describe types of mediation that are within role (helping hand informed by and devoted to deontological guidelines) and column 3 falls outside of its scope (helping hand open for other forms of help), and all three types are subject to being described as actions based on a sense of obligation towards a fellow individual. Indeed, all three fall under the realm of solidarity. I will argue that 1 and 2 fall under the realm of *solidarity with*, whereas 3 falls under the realm of *solidarity among*. The implications are not trivial: this dichotomy carries potential explanatory value as to why interpreters often find themselves in front of impossible conundrums (Kaufert and Putsch, 1997; Hale, 2008).

In his chapter on uses of solidarity, Kurt Bayertz exposes a dimension of solidarity in modern times that can be defined as the "inner cement holding together a society" (1999, p. 9). It is linked to the historic progressive division of labor. The law (contracts) and the marketplace (a locus for exchange) serve as mechanisms that enable cooperation for the satisfaction of individual needs. According to Durkheim (1902, p. 229, cited in Bayertz, 1999) the division of labor serves as a binding force for societies in which "cohesion […] is realized less and less through similarity and more and more through difference" (Bayertz 1999, p. 12). In Durkheim's analysis, a new form of solidarity rooted in societal

structures has progressively developed alongside previous forms of solidarity based on collective similarities. It can be argued that this new form of solidarity falls into what other philosophers have identified as *solidarity with.* Members of a given guild act, not from a sense of co-belonging in the groups of those who benefit from their service —there is no sense of symmetrical needs— but rather from a sense of commitment to others' needs— in solidarity *with* others.

In the case of interpreters who work in public services or community settings, their guild falls in the category of the helping professions, alongside therapists, nurses, or social workers, to name a few, whose assistance has a direct incidence on individuals' essential wellbeing. Many commit their careers to helping professions and public service responding to a sense of social responsibility or a desire to serve. After we also factor in the generalized comparatively low remuneration interpreters who work in social, medical, educational, and even legal settings receive (Hale, 2008), it seems safe to assert that many understand their profession as an act of solidarity —one that is located within a wider web of societal structures.

Within such a web, each profession has a delineated scope for acts of assistance beyond which the role of the profession becomes compromised. In that regard, offering *solidarity with* individuals in need from a professional standpoint involves acknowledging and accepting limitations. Therapists, for example, do not develop personal relationships with their clients. Professionalism, in the case of interpreting (as proposed in this model) involves refraining from actions that are not meant to support the communicative autonomy of the parties in the exchange. This is depicted in Figure 1 through the line that separates *essential* and *auxiliary* forms of mediation from the *tangential* form of mediation that is advocacy.

Situations that require the mediating person to advocate generate a conflict for the professional interpreter who is committed to professional principles of impartiality, neutrality, and supporting the direct communication of the parties that are receiving the interpreting services. Yet, certain situations do require the interpreter to take actions that are beyond the defined professional scope of assistance. I will explain in the next section what those situations are and how this kind of compelled action falls under the category of *solidarity among*.

2.2. Advocacy and decision-making

The term *advocacy* has been used to refer to related but importantly different concepts in the scholarly literature on interpreting and in the professional world. It could refer to indiscriminate action on the part of the interpreter to manage the course of the communicative event (Skaaden, 2019); it can refer to actions in support of the service user where the interpreter becomes a "helper" (Hale, 2008) or it can be used to refer to actions of support of the service provider, where the interpreter becomes a "gatekeeper" (Hale, 2008; Boéri 2023, p.6). It can also refer to defending translation and interpreting services for vulnerable populations at a systemic level (Hlavac et al., 2018; Fathi 2020). Here we will use the following restrictive and operational definition: "Taking action or speaking up on behalf of one of the parties whose safety, health, well-being or human dignity is at risk, with the purpose of preventing such harm" (adapted from Garcia-Beyaert, 2015, p.381).

When an interpreter identifies a medical error that could have irremediable consequences, when they witness systematic racism or abuse in a schooling environment, or when they become aware of systemic basic rights violations while interpreting in the legal system, this interpreter is legitimately compelled to consider taking action beyond the mediation descriptions of columns 1 and 2 in Figure 1. They might use their personal agency for purposes that depart from

their professional responsibility of supporting communicative autonomy. In their professional activity, they have been privy to information that impinges upon their conscience with a moral requirement to protect the dignity or wellbeing of fellow human beings. Getting involved beyond the interpreter's role in this kind of situations is what we call here advocacy, as per Figure 1.

Imminent (health) risks or systemic/systematic abuse towards fellow human beings are circumstances that appeal to a sense of solidarity in the meaning of fraternity. Fraternity —the concept that gained prominence in the post French Revolution times— implies kinship among all human beings, on which a universalistic understanding of morality relies (Bayertz, 1999, p. 5). A moral imperative to take action and prevent or reduce harm caused to another human being falls under the category of *solidarity among*. In these very concrete circumstances, the interpreter mediates not in their capacity as a professional providing service, but rather as a member of the human community.

The interpreter's first responsibility, however, is to fulfill their obligations under the interpreter's mandate. As argued in Section 2.1, their primary solidarity comes in the form of *solidarity with*, as members of a profession encompassed in a wider societal web with a unique contribution: supporting communicative autonomy. The relevance of neutrality and impartiality for the purpose of reliability as a message transferrer and a supporter of communicative autonomy across language barriers (professional imperative) comes in direct conflict with the urge to get personally involved and unveil, denounce, or redress an error, an abuse of power or an unfortunate situation. The circumstances that call for actions in solidarity *among* humans (moral imperative) need to be critical enough to supersede the responsibilities that stem from a commitment to offer reliable services as an interpreter. One necessarily trumps the other. Deciding whether the professional imperative or the moral imperative should prevail ought to be considered an ethical dilemma.

2.3 An archetype-based roadmap

How should an interpreter decide whether to cross the dotted line in Figure 1? Interpreters may be tempted to advocate based on the belief that they know the best course of action for the parties involved. Choosing to get involved in the parties' process, however, undermines their agency. Knowing *what* should prevail *when* involves conscious decision-making. For that purpose, the roadmap in Figure 2 (adapted from the roadmap for advocacy in Garcia-Beyaert, 2015), serves as a guide for interpreters to determine the most appropriate course of action when addressing an urge to help. By answering questions, practitioners achieve grounded decision-making through conscious identification of motivations and circumstances leading to advocacy.

The premise with this roadmap is that, to preserve the parties' agency, interfering with their process is to be avoided unless the situation is dire. To avoid unconscious motivations for getting personally involved (departing from a commitment to professionalism) awareness-based decision-making processes help to determine whether to advocate or not, and how to do so. Determining whether to advocate comes down to deciding whether to offer solidarity as a *reliable professional* (*solidarity with*) or whether to offer solidarity as a *fellow human* being (*solidarity among*). One way of gaining conscience of competing legitimate motivations is to equate these distinct motivational sources to distinct inherent archetypes.

Promoting awareness that concurrent —and sometimes competing— archetypal identities coexist is at the core of this roadmap. Naming archetypes, it is proposed, helps the interpreter establish a hierarchy of responsibilities, based on identified underlying motivations.

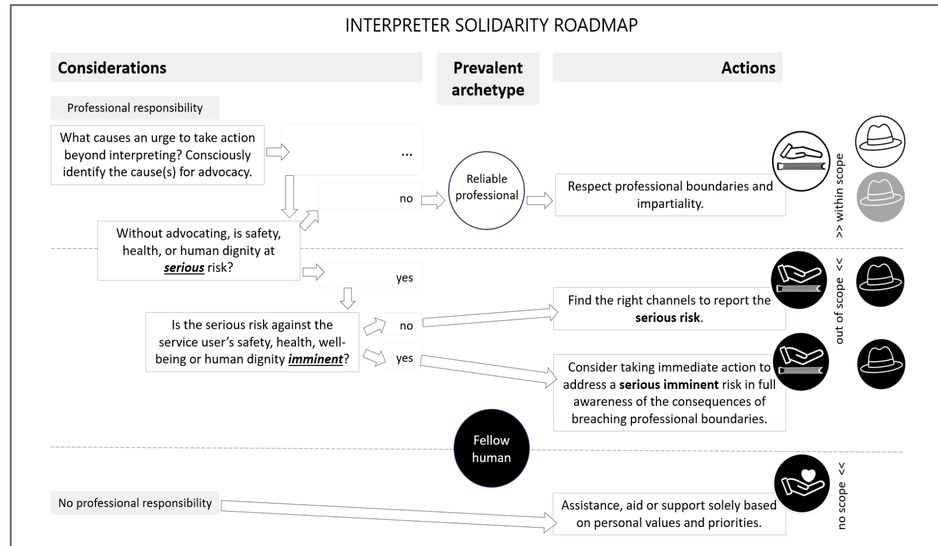

Figure 2: Decision-making roadmap for competing solidarity calls.

When interpreters face situations in which they need to choose between two incompatible approaches to showing solidarity, they are in fact faced with a choice about which of their identities should prevail in each specific situation. These identities coexist within every individual that takes on an interpreting assignment. Often, they can coexist without burdening each other. Sometimes, however, manifesting both at the same time becomes an impossible endeavor. Yet very often, through conscious analysis, finding actions that take both identities into account is a matter of naming and consciously prioritizing; archetypes help with naming and with prioritizing.

In its Greek origin, an archetype (*archetypos)* is an "original pattern". Carl Jung popularized the term to refer to inherited collective references that have an imprint on the human experience. In Jung's psychoanalysis theories (1968), archetypes are representations of the psyche that inform personal behavior. They are shared and charged with referential value, like the characters in popular fairy tales. These representations serve as a source for meaning making. We use archetypes to help determine the ethical meaning in the courses of action chosen by interpreters when faced with difficult situations.

Here, archetypes signify many, but not all, of the characteristics that Jung had ascribed to the Greek term. A critical assessment of the concept eludes the scope of this paper, but it is important to establish in which ways it serves as a frame in this study. I will be focusing on the interconnection between the collective notion and the personal behavior —namely, how collectively shared symbols have an impact on the decisions we make as individuals: the symbolic power of archetypes helps us reach a sense of coherence, and this is exploited in this study.

Clear-cut, general limitations imposed by the inherent nature of norms, standards and codes of ethics are to be incorporated into daily practice through the exercise of discretion by the discerning practitioner (Skaaden, 2019). In front of difficult and limiting decisions, finding coherence when selecting a course of action makes all the difference. Meaning-making archetypes grant the roadmap evocative power; they encapsulate referential leverage. As mental images, archetypes help narrate experiences and, in this way, they can serve as tools to comb through underlying motivations behind past and future decisions by the interpreter. Naming two distinct archetypes is an invitation to identify

and overtly state what is behind interpreter actions, and to determine whether the motivations are coherent with the highest moral *and* professional values of the individual or not.

3. Input from the field

To put the roadmap of Section 2 into perspective, three participants took part in a series of recorded conversational events, which generated narrations that are the object of analysis here. By design, the model shapes the data collection and the participants' narratives. Such narratives come from interpreters with varying degrees of professional experience in three different settings. In this section, I explain how I collected these narrative accounts, and I present a descriptive selection from a thematic analysis of their content.

3.1. Participants: tangible experiences

I met with each interpreter three times and recorded a total of 9 hours and 15 minutes of exchanges in Spanish. Searching rich narrative content, participants were deliberately selected for both commonalities and divergence: participants have comparable levels of education and training, but their accounts of their interpreting experiences while professionally employed stem from different contexts of specialization. They also have different degrees of experience and different language combinations. Two are currently full-time interpreters and one of them quit their full-time staff interpreter position after one and a half years. They all participated in the study voluntarily and were provided with written information regarding the purpose of the study before signing an informed consent. Every participant was compensated for their time at a rate similar to their professional remuneration as interpreters in public services. Figure 3 summarizes the characteristics of the participants in a way that warrants their anonymity.

PARTICIPANTS' CHARACTERISTICS

Level of education	Interpreter-specific training	Interpreting experience	Languages	Gender	Age	Settings
Higher education degrees in different fields of specialization.	At least 70 hours of interpreting education.	Ranges between one and a half years and 18 years.	Chinese, English, French, Polish, Spanish and Serbo-Croat-Bosnian and [LOCAL LANGUAGE]	Males and females represented.	Within the range of 25 – 45 years old.	Police offices, healthcare settings, and social services.

Figure 3: Anonymized characterization of participants selected.

3.2. Data collection: narrative accounts

The epistemological underpinnings of this study align with a social constructionist understanding of the world. It aligns with a claim that we all influence each other and that neither (assumed) knowledge nor the ways we relate to it is static (Lock and Strong, 2010). Accordingly, the methods employed here seek situated sources and the information shared by and with participants is treated contextually. Additionally, the research and the researcher are acknowledged as having an impact on the object of study and on the participants (Schwandt, 2000). I have chosen to incorporate deliberately

influential elements into the research design and to account for their effect. Away from positivist aspirations, depth and contrast are prioritized over quantity and similarity. The goal is to gain insights, rather than inference. This study seeks to "help human beings improve the quality of their conversational reality […] and debate the goals and values that are important in their lives" (Brinkman, 2014, p. 292, citing Flyvbjerg, 2001). I explain how in the following paragraphs.

Data collection happened in three phases, each of which was designed to generate rich narrative content. Data from multiple meetings allows a double comparison lens: comparing positionings across participants (individual variation) is one source of insight; the evolution of every participant's narrative throughout the study (progressive variation) is another source of valuable insights. All the recorded narrative events took place between May and June 2023. Each of the phases had distinct goals and the discourse prompts were designed accordingly.

The goal for phase one was to map participants' approaches to their professional activities. During a first individual semi-structured interview, participants were asked to share information about their practice. They were asked (a) where they work and what it is like, and (b) whether they can recall any situations that have posed emotional or decision-making challenges and how they dealt with them. For phase two, the goal was to gain access to participants' justifications for their actions and beliefs. To that end, we had a focus group discussion during which (a) I presented them with hypothetical situations, and they debated the best course of action for each case, and (b) I introduced them to two analytical tools from the model presented above: the roadmap in its 2015 version (which includes no archetypes and can be found in Garcia-Beyaert 2015) and the two archetypes. This led to some more discussion. Finally, for phase three, I looked for shifts in participants' positionings since the group discussion (and exposure to analytical tools). For that, a second individual semi-structured interview involved (a) asking about the interviewees' opinion of the group discussion and the tools presented, and (b) reviewing each of the case studies presented during the group discussion in light of the analytical tools.

The case studies and the steps I took to facilitate individual reflection and group discussion around them can be found at the link in the footnote.[1] These materials and their sequence were designed to offer participants space for deep reflection and to deflect initial bandwagon effects. They were also designed to appeal to personal experiences and circumstances. I used information gathered in phase one to make sure all participants would find at least one of the cases very compelling. This partly explains some of the interesting variation that is summarized under Section 3.3.

The topics of each case study can be summarized as follows: For Case 1, participants were asked whether they would infringe professional ethical tenets in order to help out a vegan service user whose sister was covertly feeding her non-vegan food; participants were also asked to describe how exactly they would proceed to address this situation. For Case 2, the same questions were asked regarding a refugee who is fleeing abuse and persecution in their country. That person is denied aid for reasons the interpreter does not agree with and, as a result, they might spend the night on the street. Finally, for Case 3, participants reflect on what to do when they see the service user's abusive husband waiting near the building where she is receiving services.

[1] https://ddd.uab.cat/record/299291

3.3 Summary of positionings

Figure 4 synthesizes the positioning of each of the participants at each of the stages. In Column 1 (and then also 3), different circle designs symbolize different positionings: from a rigid approach that is strict about role boundaries, to a boundless approach in which professional rules (such as ethical tenets) are easily disregarded, the spectrum of responses is varied among the three participants. All kinds of circles are found in Column 1 at the outset of the study. Participants had very different takes on interpreter roles. This points to the reality of a lack of unified professionalization and its consequences for the field. It also generated rich discussion for Phase 2.

Some variation is present in Columns 2 and 3, although not in such a drastic manner as in Column 1. Column 2 represents the kinds of mediation participants thought were most appropriate given the case they were presented with (see Figure 1 above for the symbolic representation of each mediation type). Horizontally, as the study progressed, each interpreter showed a certain degree of relativity in their approach. When presented with specific hypothetical cases and the divergent arguments and perspectives from fellow interpreters (during the focus group of the second meeting) the narratives of Interpreter 2 and Interpreter 3 offered interesting departures from their original positioning, some of which I discuss in Section 4.

As we will see below, horizontal variation is likely tied to situational nuance when dealing with matters of role. Despite their intended clear positioning, practitioners are, in fact, influenced by personal experiences and values. Hence the importance of clearly naming complex underlying solidarity motivations.

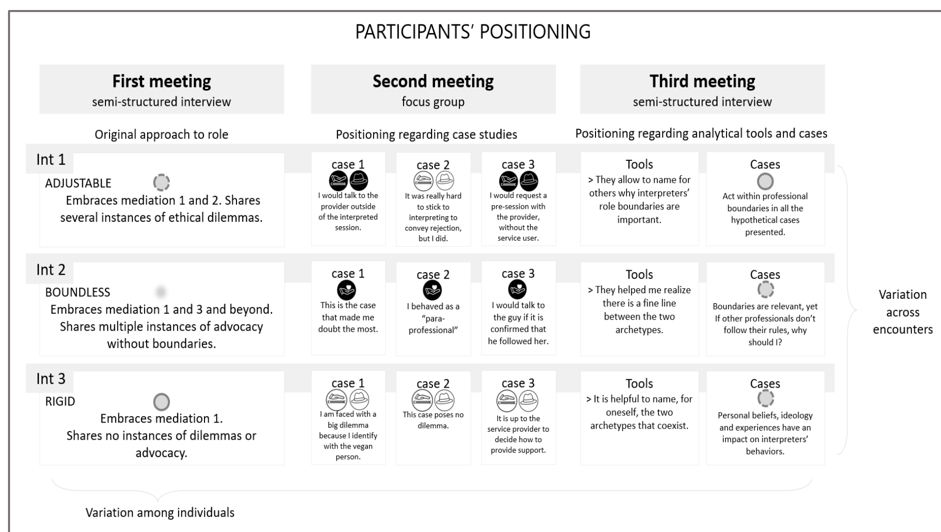

Figure 4: Individual and progressive variation in study participants' accounts

The two interpreters who had an approach to role that is aware of boundaries (Interpreter 1 and Interpreter 3) chose actions for each case that remained within the upper part of the roadmap. Their *fellow human* archetype was sometimes compelled to emerge (see commentary in Figure 4, Column 2) yet they decided, on every occasion, to honor the prevalence of the *reliable professional*.

As for Interpreter 2, during Phase 2 they proposed multiple courses of action that involved not only aligning with the *fellow human* archetype, but also ignoring many of the responsibilities of the *reliable professional*. The third column indicates a mild shift by the third meeting. The synthesizing aspirations

of the chart symbols does not do full justice to the positioning of Interpreter 2 in Column 3, however. During our last meeting, as each case was reviewed one more time in light of the analytical tools, we identified other options together and agreed on opportunities for actions that, while tending to the moral requirements of the *fellow human* archetype, also held some important values of the *reliable professional*. These are options for advocacy that kept a professional hat on (middle section of Figure 2). Yet, Interpreter 2 was also very clear on their reluctance to blindly follow restrictive rules in a system that is flawed and among professionals that have shown corrupted behavior. We delve into this further in the next section.

4. Discussing complex solidarity

Figure 4 offers a visual digestion of data. It highlights a striking variety of possible approaches. Some more granularity offers a different source of insight. For instance, participants commented on the fact that each of the case studies lends itself to creative interpretations based on past individual experiences (because inferring complementary contextual information is unavoidable). For that reason, comparison beyond the identification of variation is senseless here. It is particularly interesting, however, to pay attention to the reasoning behind each participant's choices. This section delves deeper into three themes that emerged from the analysis of the compiled narratives: the impact of experience, how the prominence of each archetype is determined, and the interrelation of interpreting with the system in place. Relevant quotes have been transcribed and then translated into English by the author for their inclusion in this section.

4.1. Experience-based degrees of involvement

All participants commented at some point on their different levels of experience. Some pointed at it as a possible explanation for their divergent approaches to the case studies and to the profession in general. The most experienced interpreter, Interpreter 3, is the one with the most rigid approach:

> You learn certain rules over time: you cannot offer your home, you cannot provide your phone number, you cannot offer money… according to my understanding. According to my experiences over years of work, you know? I think this is one of the keys… Understanding what our work is about, at least when it comes to translating or interpreting. We are a tool, but we are not a part of. […] This is also a way, in our profession, to sort of self-protect from what happens at work. (Interpreter 3, Meeting 2)

At the other end of the spectrum, the interpreter who had most recently joined the profession is the one whose approach is the laxest. They self-identified as "utopian" (Meeting 3), "impulsive" (Meeting 2) and inclined to "break rules" (Meeting 3). These personal traits might be defining of Interpreter 3's personality or linked to pre-existing ideological beliefs, but they were also certainly reinforced by their professional experience (more details under Section 4.3). This interpreter witnessed unbearable amounts of injustice and felt overwhelmed by the malfunctioning of the public services they worked for. They ended up quitting. This interpreter commented on how their fellow interpreters who worked for the same service for several years take emotional distance to avoid burnout.

In a middle position, Interpreter 1, who had been working professionally as an interpreter for four years, commented on their evolving approach to the interpreting task. They talked about having to interpret for their mother in a

different country and modifying the message to protect her, something they would not do now that they have been interpreting professionally. They also reflected on the unfeasibility of systematically providing assistance beyond professional boundaries.

> When we don't have a lot of experience, really, we tend to idealize a little what we can do beyond what is actually possible, because if you work every day and every day there's five or six people from different backgrounds, no interpreter could have time to offer all of the help that these people do need.
> (Interpreter 1, Meeting 3)

If we look at the three approaches through the lens of the archetypal duo, there is an important loss at either end of the spectrum. Interpreter 2 and Interpreter 3 have opposite-end positionings. Each of them tends to overemphasize one of the two archetypes, to the detriment of the remaining one. Too much generous involvement (by the novice interpreter) means compromising the unique *solidarity with* that interpreters are in a unique societal position to provide. Too much self-protective rigidity (by the very experienced interpreter) can lead to a lack of perceptiveness for the reality that *solidarity among* lives within us. Yet both *solidarity with* (as a *reliable professional)* and *solidarity among* (as a *fellow human)* are relevant and need to be prioritized wisely and contextually. The following comment by Interpreter 3 illustrates these points. It was made at the end of the focus group, after the very suggestive discussion that emerged from the diverging approaches and from exposure to the analytical tools:

> Thank you all because you have helped me regain some of the excitement I had when I first started in this profession. And yes, aside from being a professional, I think that in some situations we can include a hint of humanity. Above all, we should never forget that humanity is first. I mean, besides the fact that professionalism should guide us in our work, there will always be exceptional circumstances and in some extreme situations we always have to keep humanity as guidance, I think. (Interpreter 3, Meeting 2)

The commentary above points towards a search for balance that was perhaps lost along the course of a long career.

4.2. The weight of each archetype

Solidarity with, as conceptualized here, involves an understanding of society in which each profession plays a reliable role. Each guild takes on responsibilities to ensure everyone's wellbeing. Trust in the system, then, is essential to be able to embrace this kind or solidarity logic. Interpreter 1 and Interpreter 3 have a clear reliance in the role of the professionals they interpret for: "I can let the service provider know [about a compromising situation] and they will make the decision of what to do" (Interpreter 1, Meeting 2); and "it is not our role to let professionals know [about new services in their field]" (interpreter 3, second Meeting 2). Interpreter 2, however, has a different perspective.

Interpreter 2 does not believe that the conception of the "role of the translator that relies on the division of labor" is beneficial (Meeting 2). Additionally, or maybe relatedly, Interpreter 2 has learned to mistrust the service through which they interpreted due to repeated racist and male-chauvinistic behaviors among other forms of power abuse, many of which the interpreter shared during the first meeting. This remark by Interpreter 2 illustrates how their positioning is influenced by the lack of reliability in the service they were assigned to collaborate with: "[…] these are systems that

supposedly exist to attend to the wellbeing of civil society… if these people [the service providers] are arbitrary and behave against their own rules, why would I not?" In this case, lack of reliability in one profession leads to abandonment of the *reliable professional* archetype by the interpreter and, ultimately, to what could be deemed as overall systemic malfunction. The weight of the *fellow human* archetype predominates for defendable reasons which undermine, however, the very important and necessary role of the interpreter.

The negative implications of consistently departing from the limited role of the interpreter are clearly evoked in the following comment by Interpreter 1, for whom the weight of the *reliable professional* should prevail as much as possible for reasons that go beyond one isolated communicative event.

> [If the interpreter decides to take action as a fellow human] then the ambassador of the profession is not giving a good example… and the next interpreter that comes to this same place… We are giving a bad example of what the profession is and we are working against the professionalization of the field and we are doing the exact opposite of what we want to attain, which is educating those with whom we work also, so that they know what an interpreter is, how an interpreter works and what they can expect from an interpreter and what they cannot. And, also, we are losing trust because it's like… I don't know… To me it's a bit like corrupting the profession. I don't know. (Interpreter 1, Meeting 3)

Interpreter 2, who has good reason to mistrust the system and who recurrently experiences an understandable urge to engage in *solidarity among* —as a *fellow human, and* beyond the system in place— comes to a middle position that acknowledges that the two archetypes coexist and are legitimate. This allows Interpreter 2 to consider contextually balanced courses of action. The author and Interpreter 2 shared some considerations during their third meeting regarding a real reported situation in which Interpreter 2 had decided to provide proactive support to a service user well beyond the restricted interpreter role. The author suggested an alternative approach that involved engaging the system anonymously and that encompassed both the need to advocate and the importance of respecting, to the extent possible, the interpreter's ethical responsibilities. Interpreter 2 commented: "Yes, I am the translator [sic.], but I am taking care of you… If I had done [this caring supporting action] anonymously, it would be like: hey, the institution is helping you out; which would be ideal. This is true. I hadn't thought about it." (Interpreter 2, Meeting 3). With this approach, the interpreter contributes trust in and expectations from the system, which seems constructive in the long run.

According to Interpreter 3, finding the right balance is easier once you are able to name coexisting identities:

> For me… with this group discussion, I became aware that I knew… I don't know how to explain it… this sense that you know something but have no name for it, you know? Well, that's where you gave a name to these concepts that I had, you know? Because it's true, I never thought to put it that way: now I am being more of this [identity] and now I am being more of this [other identity]. [Having these concepts]in mind… yes, you realize that you can lean more towards one side or towards the other, you know?
> (Interpreter 3, Meeting 3)

This same interpreter realized during the focus group that their personal preferences and ideology had an impact on their decision-making. As a vegan of many years and a rigid interpreter, Case study 1 was surprisingly challenging for them. They commented on it during our third meeting. The honesty of Interpreter 2 was probably helpful. They shared their experience dealing with

an intolerable situation that affected a service user of their same gender and non-binary sexual orientation. Interpreter 2 was unfiltered and declared that they were more inclined to help someone they could relate to identity-wise than other service users facing similar circumstances: "Would I help just anybody because they are being persecuted by the mafia? No. I am not going to lie. I would probably be more inclined to help people with whom I can identify more, such as women, or people in the homosexual community" (Meeting 2). They used the expression *identification mechanism* to refer to this inclination after exclaiming: "I mean, this could very well have been me! […] And of course, that lights something up in you, and I didn't really think twice." Subsequently, Interpreter 3 analyzed their own biased approach to Case study 1 by borrowing this *identification* expression, which became a useful concept from then on.

Both interpreters (2 and 3) reflected on the ongoing analysis that is necessary after being able to identify and name underlying motivations, and the realization that *identification mechanisms* are at play. During our third meeting, Interpreter 2 said: "I think that [the ability to name each of the archetypes at each stage] is something that I would review after the fact, because in the moment, your emotions are often very alive, and you don't really have time to think about it […] We are obviously constantly learning." An awareness of the two coexisting identities not only provides a helpful lens through which one can analyze personal reactions in hindsight, but also this *a posteriori* analysis informs future on-the-spot reactions: nuanced reflection supports an interpreting practice that is more aware moving forward.

4.3 Engaging (with) the system

When the system is not able to effectively recognize and incorporate all its components, seamless integration becomes very difficult. If service providers hold misconceptions about the value of what interpreters bring to the table, it will be difficult for them to understand why the interpreter role is limited (*reliable professional*). This is the sentiment interpreter 1 shared: "Sometimes, the role of the interpreter seems to mean that we cannot do anything, and I think that it is true, that people can get that impression when they work with interpreters, but I think that has to do also with the fact that many people don't know what the work of the interpreter really is" (Interpreter 1, Meeting 3). In this regard, any mechanism that promotes consensual expectations among all the parties involved can help the system at large. This same interpreter alluded to the roadmap for that purpose: "[The *roadmap*] is very helpful, I think. And I think it should be shared […]. I think that clarity, both for interpreters and for those who work with interpreters… well it helps to do better work." As mentioned in 4.2, trust in the overall system is a necessary condition for all the pieces to come together.

In a real case situation that resembled Case study 2, Interpreter 1 very consequently kept their interpreter hat on even if that meant that a family with a toddler might have difficulty finding a shelter for the night.

> I limited my actions to interpreting. It was very sad to see that something like this could happen. I put myself in the shoes of this family, and yes, I felt terrible. On the other hand, I don't know these people and I cannot share my phone number. What I can do is, well, if I know of some other resource that the [service provider] is not aware of, [for example a worship center of the same religion as the family] … This is a piece of information that I could share outside of the session, maybe, with the organization for which I am working or maybe with the service provider; but I've taken off the interpreter hat at this point and I am wearing the hat of the citizen that knows of other resources. (Interpreter 1, Meeting 3)

This approach involves sharing knowledge about the system and through the system in place, and it allows the interpreter to offer support that is aligned with the *fellow human* archetype while at the same time observing the limitations that define the *reliable professional* archetype (a helping hand that is aware of professional guidelines and limitations). Interpreter 1 also shared that the family was given a different kind of support by a different provider under the same service at a different time. In the words of Interpreter 1, this family was able to exercise "their own autonomy" and find solutions for themselves within this new system.

After Interpreter 1 shared their choice and the reasons behind it, Interpreter 2 expanded upon it to include into the web the solidarity of different kinds of entities and initiatives that are outside of the institutional realm: "We could also activate support networks that exist in the city… in the case of a homosexual person, there is the option of activating LGBT support networks, or a feminist group, or a squat house, some self-managed center that is outside of the institutional structures, so that they can still receive the service they need." Interpreter 1 agreed with their approach, expanding their own conception of the interpreter's agreeable scope of actions: "I think that makes sense. Also, this idea of activating support networks so that this person in need, beyond interpreting, can find other tools and can find more support within society. Yes. This could also be one way forward. Because the *reliable professional* could also involve that: providing tools."

A final aspect regarding the relationship between interpreting and the societal web is the privileged perspectives gained through interpreting that can be of service to society. The middle position that interpreters embrace in a variety of locations and across a given city or region offers them a vantage point from which opportunities are easily spotted: opportunities for improvement, opportunities for collaboration or opportunities to denounce circumstances of systemic abuse. Interpreter 1 suggested interpreters be part of team meetings when services are being restructured, both to be informed of the changes in a service that the interpreter interacts with often and to provide the special insight that interpreters can bring to the table (in alignment with the conclusions around social responsibility and inter-professional collaboration reached by Drugan, 2017). In this same vein, Interpreter 2 lamented that interpreters have been constructed to just be "a tool at the service of others." The original contribution, they reminded the group, is in fact actively connecting worlds and persons.

These reflections are in alignment with the commentary by Interpreter 1 that sometimes the interpreting profession (and not the individual interpreter) is in a good position to advocate for change. There is potential for effective contributions by the interpreting profession that goes beyond the important task of transferring messages between languages, Interpreter 1 said. Attributing this kind of macro solidarity to one of the two archetypes proposed here seems unfitting. In that sense, this consideration might be pointing to a third archetype that can coexist. Accordingly, a reorganization of the archetypal structure of the interpreting role could take this shape: (1) the *reliable professional* in the room, at the micro level; (2) the *collaborative service* in the system, at the macro level; and (3) the *fellow human* in the world, in a ubiquitous fashion. If this trichotomy proved to be a helpful conceptual reference, it would be interesting to reflect on the effect of the third angle: does this third element bring stability to the balancing efforts of interpreters, or does it generate further complexity? This question provides a good starting point for future studies on archetypes and dilemmas.

5. Concluding remarks

For practitioners of interpreting in public services and community settings, helping others is a driving force to their activity. For so many interpreters, a sense of solidarity motivates their commitment to the profession. In a profession for which boundaries define the role, the generous character of those who are often attracted to it can make it difficult to find coherence, which can feed detrimental professional heterogeneity. This article addresses this concern by proposing and discussing a model that draws on the encapsulating and evocative power of archetypes to name distinct solidarity-based motivations.

One archetype falls within the occupational role of the interpreter: the *reliable professional* that supports the communicative autonomy of the parties. The other one falls outside of the scope of the occupational role yet needs to be acknowledged as coexisting and recurring in these settings: the *fellow human* that shows solidarity with others. Naming them allows to identify the value of different kinds of help, the appropriateness of each kind in different circumstances and, most importantly, which kind should be prioritized in each case. The kind of solidarity offered by the necessarily restrictive role of the reliable professional is the most appropriate in most cases. Such is the proposition that is put forward and analyzed here.

The goal is to both promote and automatize reflexive and aware decision-making. As illustrated by the exchanges with the participant interpreters in this study, portraying inevitably concurrent solidarity identities can aid in explicitly (reflection promoted) or implicitly (reflection automatized) explaining the reasoning behind one's actions, ultimately facilitating ethical decision-making that is aligned with coherent and high professional standards. Potential applications of the model range from individual use by practicing interpreters, to group discussion of real case studies in (staff) interpreter meetings, to conceptual foundations for class materials to train interpreters-to-be.

Surprisingly, the interpreter narratives gathered for this study did not touch on the dimension of solidarity that relies on culturally based group allegiance, such as ethnic affiliation or shared religious backgrounds. This is certainly worth exploring under solidarity archetypal frames and the notion of cognitive dissonance, which was beyond the scope of this article. Can archetypal frames help interpreters find coherent narratives among competing ideas of self and others which are rooted in their multilayered (cultural) identities? This question and the question about potentially incorporating further archetypes to the framework (Section 4.3) open ample avenues for further exploration.

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