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Preface

The idea behind this thesis was to learn about the conference interpreting profession in Brazil. The journey of exploration began in Vienna at the library of the Centre for Translation Studies and took me to the world's most beautiful city (citation needed) Rio de Janeiro, as well as to Brazil's financial and economic capital, the impressive city of São Paulo. In these cities, over a dozen professional conference interpreters were so kind as to share with me their perspectives and ideas on the exercise of their profession in Brazil. A number of others offered their help but due to different circumstances we ended up never managing to make the interviews happen. To maintain their anonymity, their names shall not be mentioned, but I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of them for their generosity and support and for the welcoming spirit in which they patiently answered all my questions and also put me in touch with other colleagues. My encounters with the conference interpreters I had the honor to meet in Brazil were both enjoyable and inspiring. Thank you for sharing your time and knowledge with me! This project was only possible thanks to your help. I extend my warmest gratitude also to my supervisor Professor Franz Pöchhacker who, apart from being undeniably competent, was also exceptionally supportive from the beginning to the end of this project. Thank you also Carolina Borges, Susana Kampff Lages, Johannes Kretschmer and Sebastian Felder for your help with administrative and logistical aspects of this endeavour. And thank you to my friends in Brazil for opening your homes to me and for being of support in so many ways, particularly Teresa Duque Estrada, Eduardo Cruz and Lucas Monteiro. Um forte abraço para vocês! Thank you also to the University of Vienna for supporting the project.

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List of acronyms

ABRAPT - *Associação Brasileira de Pesquisa em Tradução* (Brazilian Association of Translation Research)

ABRATES - *Associação Brasileira de Tradutores* (Brazilian Association of Translators)

ABRATES - *Associação Brasileira de Tradutores e Intérpretes* (Brazilian Association of Translators and Interpreters)

ACETESP - *Associação Cearense de Tradutores Públicos* (Association of Sworn Translators of Ceará)

AIIC - *Associação Internacional de Intérpretes de Conferências* (International Association of Conference Interpreters)

APIC - *Associação Paulista de Intérpretes de Conferências* (Association of Conference Interpreters of São Paulo)

APIC - *Associação Profissional de Intérpretes de Conferências* (Professional Association of Conference Interpreters)

ASTRAJURS - *Associação dos Tradutores Públicos e Intérpretes Comerciais do Rio Grande do Sul* (Association of Sworn Translators and Commercial Interpreters of Rio Grande do Sul)

ATA - American Translators Association

ATP-RIO - *Associação dos Tradutores Públicos do Rio de Janeiro* (Association of Sworn Translators of Rio de Janeiro)

ATPIESP - *Associação Profissional dos Tradutores Públicos e Intérpretes Comerciais do Estado de São Paulo* (Professional Association of Sworn Translators and Commercial Interpreters of the State of São Paulo)

CCE - *Cursos de Especialização e Extensão* (Specialization and Extension Courses)

FAAP - *Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado* (Armando Alvares Penteado Foundation)

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

Hi²T - High Intensity Interpreting Training

IBGE - *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics)

OAS - Organization of American States

PAHO - Pan-American Health Organization

PR - Public Relations

PRIMS - Private Market Sector (of AIIC)

PUC-Rio - *Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro* (Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro)

PUC-SP - *Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo* (Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo)

SEBRAE - *Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas* (Brazilian Support Service for Micro and Small Enterprises)

SIMBI - *Simpósio Brasileiro de Interpretação* (Brazilian Symposium on Interpreting)

SINTRA - *Sindicato Nacional dos Tradutores* (National Translator's Union)

UERJ - *Universidade do Estado de Rio do Janeiro* (State University of Rio de Janeiro)

USP - *Universidade de São Paulo* (University of São Paulo)

1 Introduction

The main purpose of this thesis is to offer the reader insight into the profession of conference interpreting as it is practiced in Brazil. Since not much has been published on this topic so far in English, a broad approach has been chosen with the intent to provide an encompassing overview of the profession in light of the notion of professionalization. Knowledge about many of the aspects presented in this paper could easily be enhanced by further studies.

Interpreting as a documented occupation practiced in the territories known today as “Brazil” goes back at least to the early days of Portuguese colonialism. It can be taken for granted, however, that the activity has been practiced in the region ever since peoples of different languages have been engaging in trade with one another. Modern conference interpreting in Brazil dates back to the 1940s and since then the occupation has seen significant steps toward increasing professionalization. The 1970s were a particularly important decade, in that it saw the emergence of the Professional Association of Conference Interpreters (APIC) as well as the formation of important interpreter training courses that continue to exist today. In the new millennium, until the end of the Olympic Games held in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, the profession can be said to have flourished in Brazil. Aside from inevitable fluctuations, interpreters had a lot of work, solid sources of demand derived from a variety of sectors and new opportunities for professional training as well as further education were emerging. The political and economic crises suffered by the country over the past couple of years has not left the profession unaffected. Furthermore, in light of the increasing emergence of agencies that have been described as “predatory,” along with a tendency for the *lingua franca* English to replace interpreting services altogether, it is no exaggeration to conclude that the profession itself is currently in crisis. Conjectures concerning how technology might transform the profession do not exactly contribute to much optimism for the future either. At the same time, there are indications that the profession is gaining visibility and recognition. There are significant tendencies of collaboration among the different professional associations and training institutions. Interpreting as a profession has gained considerable space at the country’s largest annual translators’ conference. Young professionals are taking initiative in the training sector and a tendency towards increasing consolidation of the profession can be observed. On the whole, an immense dynamism appears to characterize the conference interpreting profession in Brazil. The field is complex and a number of contrasting and

conflicting tendencies exist. And, sure enough, there is much uncertainty as to how the profession will develop over the coming years.

The main research question that guides this study is the following:

How professionalized is the occupation of conference interpreting in Brazil?

If a more progressive lens is chosen for one's vantage point, the question might be stated in the following manner:

What degree of professionalization has the occupation of conference interpreting achieved in Brazil?

A number of secondary research questions serve to offer a wider scope to the inquiry:

What factors might contribute to an increasing level of professionalization in the Brazilian context?

What obstacles exist that might hinder the professionalization process?

What measures can the profession take to promote further professionalization?

These research questions are approached by employing a strategy of methodological triangulation. It consists in the synthesis of two methods of the social sciences: a literature review and a corresponding interpretative document analysis of the relevant publications encountered on the one hand and, on the other, the conducting of semi-structured expert interviews and a qualitative content analysis of the collected data.

The conceptual lens through which this study approaches the topic is that of *professionalization*. The theoretical foundation for the investigation is provided by Joseph Tseng (1992), who, in the course of an endeavour to better understand the developing conference interpreting profession in Taiwan, proposed a professionalization model. This model offers guidance and orientation for the study at hand. It is a multi-stage model that implies a progression through various stages of professionalization. Surely, this approach is

not entirely unproblematic and it will become evident that empirical results often refuse to fit neatly into predefined categories or stages. Studying reality - in this case the reality of the conference interpreting profession in Brazil - is a complex endeavour and conclusive results in the social sciences often hinge on convictions and perspectives. Nonetheless, Tseng's multi-stage professionalization model was a useful theoretical framework through which to approach the topic.

An investigation into the existing literature on the professionalization of conference interpreting in Brazil bore few results. While the budding field of interpreting studies in Brazil has been gaining momentum over the past decade, few studies have dealt specifically with the professionalization process. It thus became clear that in order to pay due consideration to the subject and to approach the corresponding research endeavour with a minimum of scientific rigor, an extended research stay in Brazil would become inevitable. The present paper is the result of a research project conducted in Austria and Brazil between October 2018 and January 2019.

The following chapter, Theoretical foundations, provides theoretical discussions of some of the central concepts of the thesis, namely 'conference interpreting' and 'professionalization.' It presents Tseng's professionalization model in some detail and explains how the model will be applied to study the empirical data on conference interpreting in Brazil. Chapter 3 offers a review of the most relevant publications related to the topic that could be identified. Chapter 4 presents the methods used for this study. The first of two analytical chapters, Chapter 5, provides an overview of the profession of conference interpreting as it has developed over the decades and as it is practiced today. It includes a historical overview and a discussion of important dimensions to the exercise of the profession and the market for conference interpreting in Brazil. Chapter 6 is the analytical core of the study. It is structured according to the key professionalization indicators elaborated at the end of the chapter on Theoretical foundations and, accordingly, discusses the extent to which there is consensus and commitment to the profession among practitioners; introduces and analyses the significance of the nation's most important conference interpreter training institutions; addresses all the relevant professional associations; ventures into the field of regulation, state protection and licensure; attempts to make meaningful assertions regarding the public recognition and visibility of the profession; and looks at the ability of the profession to exercise control over its working conditions. Chapter 6 closes with an outlook for the future of the profession in

Brazil. Chapter 7 strives to tie up this study, drawing conclusions wherever possible and making recommendations for further study wherever appropriate. It also addresses some of the limitations of this study.

The results of the thesis depend on the congruence between theory and empirical data. If Tseng's professionalization model turns out to be useful for gaining a deeper understanding of the development of the profession in Brazil, then it should become possible to make some informed assertions on the current state of professionalization according to the model. If it turns out that the model is obsolete or only partially relevant to the specific case under scrutiny, then there might be grounds for some modest suggestions for amendment.

Professionalization is not an empirical linear process with a defined trajectory but rather a conceptual construct to help make sense of empirical reality. In spite of a professionalization model leading the way, the merit of this study will not lie solely in construing some form of assessment as to the current state of professionalization, but rather in providing insight, discussing current tendencies and in raising issues of relevance to the profession. In this sense, the maxim that 'the journey is the reward' very much holds true for this study.

2 Theoretical foundations

For the purpose of mapping out the object of this study, it is important to define and clarify the central concepts. This study deals with the profession of conference interpreting as it is practiced in Brazil and the present chapter provides a discussion of the terms ‘conference interpreting’ and ‘professionalization.’ Thereafter, the professionalization model as proposed by Tseng is presented and an explanation is provided on how the model will be operationalized for this study.

2.1 Conference interpreting

According to Stolz (2006:308), a conference interpreter is a person who by profession acts as a responsible linguistic intermediary (alone or more often as a member of a team) in a formal or informal conference or conference-like situation, thanks to his or her ability to provide simultaneous or consecutive oral interpretation of participants’ speeches, regardless of their length and complexity. *Conference interpreting* is thus defined as the corresponding professional activity.

Pöchhacker (2004:16 *et seq.*) categorizes different types of interpreting according to their respective social and institutional context. On the one hand, he distinguishes between international and community-based interpreting. International interpreting is seen as a translational activity that takes place in an inter-social sphere, where the communication occurs between groups of people that speak different languages. Community-based interpreting involves situations in which the translational activity occurs in an intra-social sphere, in which there are certain individuals, usually foreigners, that need interpreting services within the context of a society, the language of which they do not speak and/or understand sufficiently well for any given situation. Examples of community-based interpreting include court interpreting, where the interpreting service facilitates the communicational process during legal proceedings involving a person that does not speak and/or understand the language of the court sufficiently well. Another example is medical/hospital interpreting, where the communication between a doctor or medical staff

and a patient is mediated by an interpreter. Yet another example of community-based interpreting is public service interpreting, where the communication between an individual and an entity that provides a public service is mediated by an interpreter. Media or broadcast interpreting (e.g. TV interpreting) is another form of interpreting that often takes place within a society, the members of which share a common language, and therefore can be seen as pertaining to the intra-social sphere. However, since what is translated often pertains to the international sphere, this form of interpreting has characteristics according to which it can also be categorized as pertaining to the inter-social sphere. This example illustrates how the criteria by which different forms of interpreting can be categorized are not always easy to determine. Another case in point is interpreting at war crimes tribunals, where court interpreting, a typical form of community interpreting pertaining to the intra-social sphere, is suddenly categorized as international interpreting taking place in an inter-social sphere (Pöchhacker 2004:15).

Apart from the distinction between international and community-based interpreting, Pöchhacker (2004:17) also distinguishes between conference interpreting and liaison/dialogue interpreting. In this case, the setting is the distinguishing factor. The latter form usually occurs in situations with very few individuals, typically for example a “one-on-one” conversation between two individuals that speak different languages and need the mediation of an interpreter. These individuals can belong to the realms of business or politics, but dialogue interpreting can also occur between a psychotherapist and a patient for example. Conference interpreting typically involves situations where presentations held by individuals before audiences are orally translated. According to Pöchhacker (2004:16), international conference interpreting “has spread far beyond multilateral diplomacy to virtually any field of activity involving coordination and exchange across linguistic boundaries.” The factor that defines conference interpreting by distinguishing it from other forms of interpreting is that it takes place in a specific type of setting, namely a conference or conference-like situation. Pöchhacker calls this a “particular format of interaction.” He draws attention to the fact that conference interpreting “is often set in an international environment.” However, the existence of local or national markets for conference interpreting is very common, “mainly between English and the national language.”

Other parameters by which interpreting can be categorized include the language modality. A typical distinction that is made in terms of the language modality is that between spoken-

language interpreting and sign-language interpreting. In the latter case, specific modalities include fingerspelling or tactile interpreting, where a person that is deaf-blind feels another person's hands while that second person communicates using sign language (Pöchhacker 2004:18).

The working mode is another distinguishing parameter when it comes to categorizing different forms of interpreting. The main distinction that is drawn is that between simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. In simultaneous interpreting, the interpreter speaks and listens simultaneously and is often aided by the use of audio equipment. However, in the case of whispered interpreting, which is also known by its French name "*chuchotage*," the interpreter generally whispers the message into the ears of one or two listeners simultaneously without using any simultaneous interpreting equipment. Consecutive interpreting is the working mode in which the interpreter speaks not at the same time but rather after the original speaker. Traditionally, when interpreting consecutively the interpreter takes notes of the original speech and then refers back to these notes during the rendition. In short consecutive, the speaker periodically interrupts the presentation for the interpreter to speak. In these cases, the units of speech are often short enough for the interpreter to dispense with note taking altogether (Pöchhacker 2014:18 *et seq.*).

Another distinction can be drawn with regard to professional status. Interpreting is an activity that many bilingual children of immigrants often grow up doing on a daily basis, to help their parents communicate. It is very common for people who speak foreign languages to be asked to translate something *ad hoc*. On the other hand, there are professionals who have received extensive training and make a living from offering interpreting services.

The present study deals with professional conference interpreting in Brazil. The different categorization parameters presented in this chapter are useful to grasp the complexity of interpreting as a form of social behaviour, however it is important to understand that the distinguishing lines are not always clear cut. The different domains are all related and the boundaries between them are often fuzzy. Although the data on which this study relies consists largely of interviews with professional conference interpreters, this does not mean that these individuals work exclusively at international conferences. They may well identify as conference interpreters while at the same time accepting jobs as TV interpreters, liaison interpreters or court interpreters. Indeed, it is not uncommon for interpreters in Brazil to take

on written translation jobs in between interpreting assignments. However, the main focus of this study lies on their role as conference interpreters.

Although court interpreting is not strictly an object of this thesis, it does receive a degree of prominence due to the fact that this professional niche is legally regulated in Brazil, unlike conference interpreting. As discussed in the chapter Theoretical foundations, a defining characteristic of the fourth and final phase of professionalization according to Tseng's model is the legal regulation of the profession. Therefore, it would make no sense to exclude this form of interpreting from the present study, despite the main focus remaining on conference interpreting.

Sign language interpreting is a field that is currently gaining visibility and prominence in Brazil. Not least for this reason it is worthy of academic study, however, the scope of this paper does not allow for more than mentioning this topic in passing.

2.2 Professionalization

The Oxford English Online Dictionary defines the noun *profession* in the following manner: “A paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification” (OEOD 2018a). The Collins English Dictionary defines the term as “a type of job that requires advanced education or training” (CD 2018). The word is, of course, polysemous and other meanings relate to *professing* in the sense of making religious declarations, which presently are not of concern. However, the origin of *profession* in the above sense is interesting to note: it “derives from the notion of an occupation that one ‘professes’ to be skilled in” (OEOD 2018a).

The term *professionalization* is defined by the Oxford dictionary as follows: “The action or process of giving an occupation, activity, or group professional qualities, typically by increasing training or raising required qualifications” (OEOD 2018b). These definitions use the terms *job* and *occupation* as contrasting notions. However, when we look up *occupation*, for example, we find definitions - apart from “taking control of buildings,” etc. - such as “A way of spending time”, but also “A job or profession” (OEOD 2018c).

Conceptually, if an occupation is a profession, then it makes no sense to study professionalization as a process by which a full-fledged profession emerges from a mere occupation. But despite the fact that in everyday language *occupation* and *profession* can at times be used interchangeably, these rudimentary dictionary definitions contain some of the same elements that Tseng (1992) incorporates into his professionalization: professional qualities, increasing training and raising required qualifications.

According to Grbic (2015:322), in common language the term can refer to a type of occupation requiring special education and skills and enjoying certain recognition and status in society as a consequence. In the social sciences, particularly in sociological research on occupations, such concepts as ‘profession’ and ‘professionalization’ have served as heuristic tools to help explain the development of occupational groups. Since the early 19th century, the term ‘profession’ has been commonly used in sociology. However, there is still some controversy around the use of this term among social scientists. “While some authors consider it an appropriate analytical concept for the study of archetypical occupational groups (e.g. in medicine or law), others refrain from using it in this general sense and treat it as a folk concept and an element of the subjective language of practitioners” (Grbic 2015:322). Becker (1976, as cited in Grbic 2015:322) concludes that the term ‘profession’ should be “treated as a social symbol” because its meaning is ambiguous, having both a descriptive as well as a moral and evaluative sense. In this paper, the terms ‘profession’ and ‘professionalization’ will be used in the sense that emerges from the sociological debate outlined below.

2.3 Tseng’s professionalization model

For the purpose of this paper, Tseng’s (1992) professionalization model will be applied as a theoretical foundation. In his master’s thesis of 1992, *Interpreting as an Emerging Profession in Taiwan - a Sociological Model*, Joseph Tseng developed a sociological model for the professionalization process of the conference interpreting profession in Taiwan. Without delving too deeply into a sociological debate on *professionalization*, Tseng (1992) does provide an overview along two main lines of thought: trait theory and the theory of control, which will be discussed below. “Tseng [...] positions himself in the tradition of the ‘power

approach', acknowledging his interest in successful strategies to help achieve the status of a 'full-fledged profession' and acquire internal and external control. Tseng's model has proved highly influential" (Grbic 2015:323 *et seq.*). In the context of interpreting studies, the model has been applied in numerous contexts, such as in the field of community interpreting and sign-language interpreting (Pöchhacker 2004:87).

2.3.1 Trait theory

In an attempt to distinguish the concepts of *occupation* and *profession*, social scientists adhering to the trait theory have proposed a number of specific differentiating characteristics or traits, such as the existence of a code of ethics, that skills are based on theoretical knowledge, that competence is tested, etc. In the sociology of the professions, this 'checklist' approach was common until the late 1960s and emerged from the Anglo-American functionalist school of thought (Grbic 2015:322). Citing Millerson (1964), Grbic (2015) characterizes this approach in the following way:

It focusses on functional and structural traits of an occupation, such as (a) a skill based on theoretical knowledge; (b) a skill requiring education and training; (c) demonstration of competence by passing a test; (d) integrity by adherence to a code of ethics; (e) service for the public good; and (f) organization, none of which are universally acknowledged as essential.

Seen from the perspective of the trait theory, *professionalization* is thus perceived as a process by which such characteristics emerge along a continuum with inconspicuous occupations at one extreme, semi-professions in the middle and full-fledged professions at the other (Grbic 2015:322). A movement in the opposite direction would accordingly be called "de-professionalization" (Hermanowicz & Johnson 2014, as cited in Grbic 2015:322).

2.3.2 Theory of control

Other social scientists tend to think of *professionalization* in terms of what is known as the *power approach* (Tseng 1992:19 *et seq.*). This line of thinking emerged in the 1970s as a critical response to the positivist theorizing of the functionalist school and concentrated on concepts such as professional privilege and dominance. The notion of power is central to this approach (Grbic 2015:322). A milestone in the development of this line of thinking was

Freidson's (1970, as cited in Grbic 2015:323) study of the medical profession. According to Larson (1977:xvii, as cited in Grbic 2015:323), social mobility and market control are the outcome of "an attempt to translate one order of scarce resources – special knowledge and skills – into another – social and economic rewards." According to this view, scarcity can be maintained through a professional project, allowing for a tendency towards monopoly within the particular area of expertise.

Proponents of the theory of control perceive professions as those occupations that have emerged on top in a struggle for the control over certain aspects of the work. For Larson (1977:xvi, as cited in Tseng 1992:20), professions are occupations that have "organized themselves to attain market control." Wilding (1982, as cited in Tseng 1992:20) sees *professionalization* as a process by which occupations strive to attain "autonomy and control of the terms of work." Professional associations, which bundle individual efforts, are seen as essential institutions in the emergence of professions.

Professions can exert control both internally and externally. Internal control refers to the power over specialized knowledge via institutions such as professional schools, specialized university courses or research facilities. These institutions also contribute to the standardization of professional expertise which, according to Larson (1997, as cited in Tseng 1992:20), is a key element of professionalization as it allows clients to distinguish professional from lay services. Internal control also involves such aspects as controlling the admission of new professionals and influence on legal accreditation or licensure.

External control refers to ways of exerting control over the market. This includes control over working conditions, the working environment, remuneration, etc., but also refers to defining the needs of clients and making sure that among them there is sufficient knowledge about the profession so that it can be exercised in line with the interests of the professionals.

2.3.3 Tseng's professionalization model explained

Tseng (1992:33 *et seq.*) concludes that neither the trait theory nor the theory of control are particularly useful tools to better understand the reality of the emerging interpreting

profession in Taiwan. In general, he perceives the theory of control as superior to the trait theory mainly because of one major shortcoming of the latter: there is considerable disagreement among researchers concerning the exact composition of traits that would then ultimately turn an occupation into a profession. Also, some of the attributes of full-fledged professions are also existent in non-professional occupations, albeit to a lesser degree. The control theory appears to be more suitable as it puts the focus on the aspirations of the emerging profession, i.e. exercising control, both inwardly and outwardly, rather than attempting to acquire specific professional attributes. Nevertheless, Tseng (1992:38) concludes that the control theory is just as inadequate as the trait theory in defining the final stage of professionalization. Due to these shortcomings, Tseng devises his own model to help understand the professionalization process of the interpreting profession. This model construes a progression of an emerging profession through four phases, starting in a condition of *Market Disorder* and finally reaching *Professional Autonomy*. The four phases of the model are now considered one by one.

2.3.3.1 Phase I: Market disorder

As the name suggests, in this initial phase of the four-phase model the market is in a state of disorder. There are no effective restrictions or established norms. Individuals active on the market have no means by which they can keep outsiders from entering and competing with them. Since no mechanisms of quality control have been established, clients tend to feel somewhat wary about the service. This tendency is further reinforced by the fact that knowledge about the field is generally limited. Lay people and more specifically trained individuals compete on a free and unrestricted market. Advertising and price-cutting are commonplace. Since it is difficult to distinguish highly qualified from not so qualified services, price, being a measurable entity, tends to determine who is awarded the contracts.

In order to gain a competitive advantage, some of the individuals working under conditions of *Market Disorder* seek professional training. In this initial phase, training is not very homogenous with regard to terms of admission, content, duration of training, qualification of staff, etc. Free from any hindering regulation, training institutions can pop up and flood the market with more or less well trained individuals, which exacerbates the existing competition. The diversity in quality further increases the lack of confidence on the part of

clients. However, the impact of training institutions on the market situation is two-fold, since some can also produce a positive effect for the advancing professionalization.

Because this situation is dissatisfying for many of the qualified practitioners operating on the market, a tendency emerges where certain professionalization strategies are adopted. Practitioners sharing a common view for the future of the market and their position therein come together to foster strategies to improve their status and professional outlook.

2.3.3.2 Phase II: Consensus & commitment

Training institutions play a pivotal role in the movement from *Market Disorder* to *Consensus & Commitment*. With time, the high-end training institutions will have produced a critical mass of highly qualified practitioners who are bound to share the same vision about the necessity of organizing the profession and creating protective measures against outsiders and malpractice which is damaging for the profession. Thus, a consensus emerges along with a commitment to improving the *status quo* of the profession. During *Phase II*, an evolution takes place in the quality of training institutions, from low-quality institutions in *Phase I* towards training institutions that produce highly qualified and competent practitioners as of *Phase III*. Training institutions will continue to play a vital role in reinforcing *Consensus & Commitment*, particularly those institutions sanctioned and recognized by the emerging professional associations.

2.3.3.3 Phase III: Establishment of professional associations

By the time *Phase III* sets in, practitioners sharing certain views and goals regarding the profession have united in a professional association. Only in the realm of professional associations will the individual practitioners truly be able to exert influence over the conditions of their work, control the behaviour of their peers and colleagues, control admission to the profession and lobby effectively for the recognition of the profession.

An essential aspect of the professional associations' work is the elaboration of a code of ethics as well as insisting on its enforcement. A code of ethics will typically contain

provisions to reduce competition among practitioners along with certain minimal standards for the quality of service as well as for acceptable working conditions. Viewed through the lens of the theory of control discussed above, a code of ethics thus represents a central tool for the wielding of internal power within the profession. At the same time it also helps exert external control, since, at least theoretically, it serves to guarantee minimum quality standards and can thus be used to earn trust among potential clients and raise the profile of the profession among the public at large. Tseng (1992:49) sees a functional code of ethics as a central pillar for the power and effectiveness of a professional association.

Another important aspect of the professional associations' activities consists in publicity work. On the one hand, the association can, on behalf of its members, inform clients about what makes a service professional and of the highest quality and what kind of working conditions contribute to achieving satisfying results. On the other hand, the association can also launch public relations campaigns to raise the general profile of the profession. Referring back again to the control theory of professionalization, what the association is trying to achieve through these measures is to attain external control over the market.

2.3.3.4 Phase IV: Professional autonomy

The final phase of the model is initiated through political persuasion emanating either from the professional association itself or from clients in need of professional services or even from the wider public. *Professional Autonomy* exists once there is legal protection of the profession as well as licensure. This can be achieved through a number of factors. If the profile of the profession is raised and there is a more general understanding of what the profession is about among the public, this can create a nurturing context. The professional association can actively endeavour to exert political pressure so as to foster the adoption of legislation that would grant autonomy to the profession and protect it from encroachment by laypeople. This can be achieved via campaigning work and by taking advantage of the political connections of the association itself as well as those of its individual members.

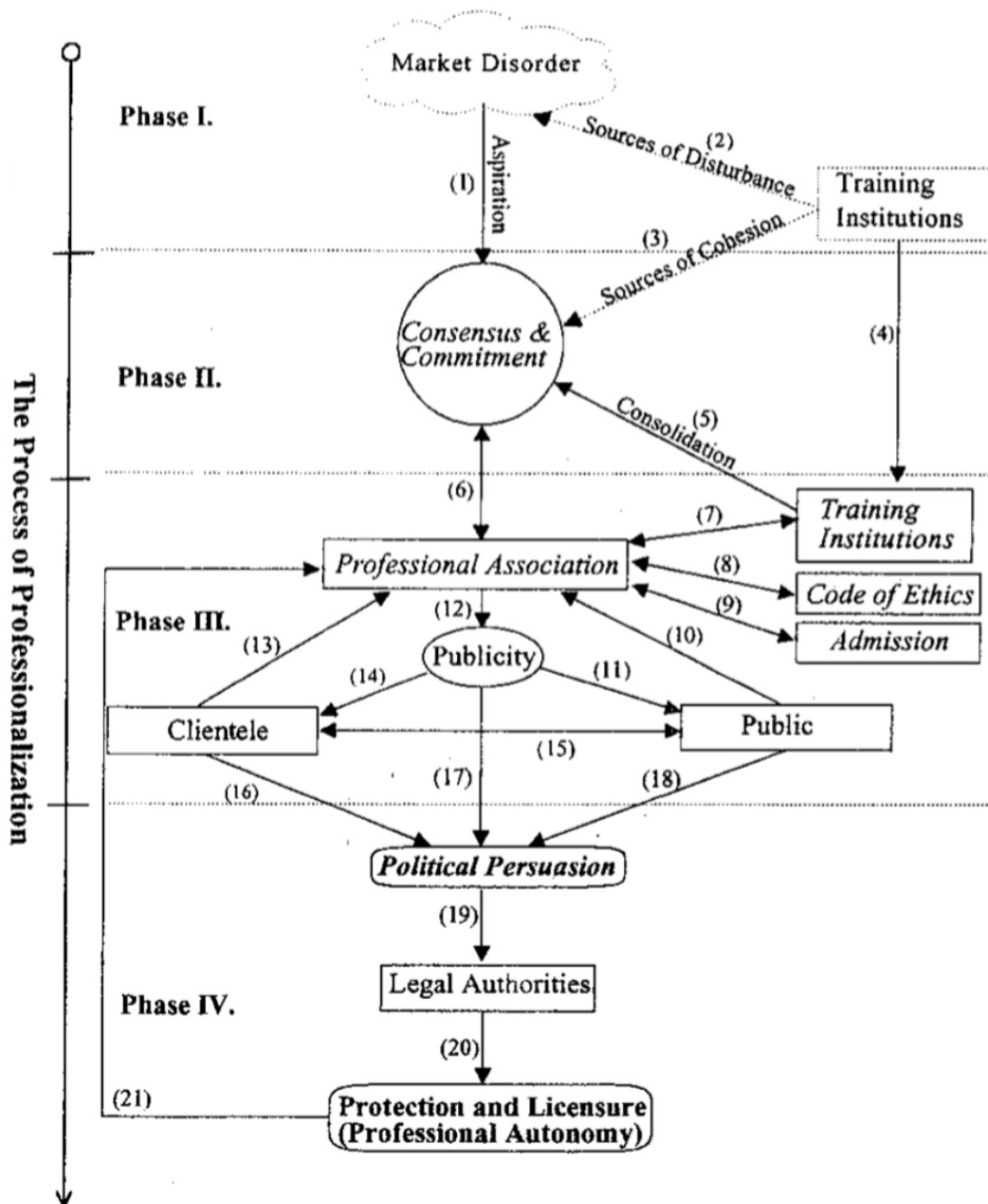


Figure 1: Professionalization Model according to Tseng (1992)

It is important to note that Tseng did not conceive of the professionalization process as a smooth transition through the different phases culminating in the climax of *Phase IV*. Rather, he allowed for the possibility of a circular or even spiral motion of increasing

professionalization. Once a certain degree of professional autonomy is achieved, this in turn can empower the professional association to exercise more political pressure to achieve further laws enhancing protection and licensure. We should also note that the process of professionalization is by no means something to be taken for granted, i.e. occupations must not necessarily professionalize and even deprofessionalization processes can occur. Also, the time span of the process can be very long and there is surely no linearity regarding the time needed to transgress from one phase to the next. The process of professionalization is highly dynamic and determined by constant power struggles. As is the case with many theoretical models in the social sciences, Tseng's professionalization model is merely a conceptual tool to simplify and help grasp a thoroughly complex reality.

In 2009, Ju published a paper named 'The Professionalization of Interpreting in Taiwan: A Critical Review of Tseng's Model,' in which the professionalization process of conference interpreting in Taiwan over the decades is reviewed and some changes to Tseng's sociological model are proposed. The paper is currently only available in Mandarin and due to the author's inability to read this language its content could not be taken into consideration for the present study.

2.3.4 Application of Tseng's professionalization model

In order to apply the theoretical model to the data collected for this study, a number of key professionalization indicators have been extracted. These indicators provide the structure along which the research findings of this study will be analyzed. They also provide the logic behind the presentation of the findings in Chapter 6, Professionalization: stages and trends.

The existence of a **consensus** among professionals and a **commitment** of certain groups of practitioners to fostering the profession is an elementary stepping stone on the path towards professionalization according to Tseng's model. The establishment of the first professional association of conference interpreters in Brazil goes back almost half a century. There is no doubt that in terms of the professionalization model presented above, the situation in Brazil is far beyond *Phase I*. However, including this indicator in the analysis turned out to provide an

interesting dimension with regard to the perception that practitioners have of the interpersonal situation within the profession.

A more tangible indicator is that of **training institutions**, the emergence and quality of which are a central elements along the professionalization process. An evolution towards high-end, high-quality institutions is one indicator for a movement towards increased professionalization and the existence of such institutions indicates an advanced stage of professionalization according to the model (at least *Phase III*).

According to Tseng (1992:75), **professional associations** are by far the most important factor when it comes to assessing professionalization. They bundle the interests and endeavours of individual practitioners, interact with training institutions and take responsibility for the creation and monitoring of a code of ethics. They also have the power to control admission, if not to the profession, then at least to the association itself, thereby guaranteeing a certain minimum quality that can be expected of associated members. Professional associations are the key vehicle by which a profession can exercise internal and external control.

State measures to enforce **protection and licensure** of the profession are indicative of an advanced stage of professionalization, i.e. *Phase IV* of the model. As discussed above, this is achieved through political persuasion by the professional association which can then result in the adoption of relevant legislation.

A final indicator for professionalization included in this enquiry is the **public perception of conference interpreting**, because Tseng's model considers this an important element contributing to political persuasion that could ultimately culminate in Phase IV, *Professional Autonomy*.

3 Literature review

As stated in the introduction, an initial enquiry into the existing publications on the topic bore few results. Only three publications dealing with specific aspects of the professionalization of conference interpreting in Brazil could be identified. One in particular proved instrumental for the initial research phase of this study, a doctoral thesis defended at the University of São Paulo by Reynaldo José Pagura in 2010: *A interpretação de conferências no Brasil: história de sua prática profissional e a formação de intérpretes brasileiros*.¹ Pagura offers a broad overview of the profession as it has been practiced in Brazil since the 1940s. He concentrates on the development of the profession and uses methods borrowed from oral history to gather interview data as an “insider researcher,” as proposed by Koskinen (2008). The methods of this study also involve a critical media analysis. Apart from offering a historical analysis of the early decades of the profession, including the events around the establishment of the professional association APIC, Pagura provides an analysis of how the interpreting profession is perceived by the Brazilian media, a discussion of the relationships among interpreters as well as those between them and event organizers, and offers an overview of large international events with interpreting services held in Brazil. Pagura dedicates an entire chapter to training institutions, placing the Brazilian training programmes of the past and present into an international context. The doctoral thesis concludes with a discussion of future tendencies such as remote interpreting, an increase in monolingual events and the increasing presence of agencies on the Brazilian market for interpreting services. Many of the topics covered in the present thesis were among Pagura’s objects of study. To some extent the present study, conducted around a decade after the completion of Pagura’s thesis, is thus an update of his research. Indeed, many of the tendencies observed in the doctoral thesis have been confirmed by the present study.

Another study dealing with aspects of the profession in Brazil is Rebecca Frances Atkinson’s master’s thesis *O intérprete em seu meio profissional. Por uma voz mais alta*,² which was defended in 2006 at PUC-Rio. The focus lies on interpreting in the city of Rio de Janeiro as a social activity and on the professional interpreter as an agent in interaction with other stakeholders at events mediated by simultaneous interpreting. The study is based on nine

¹ “Conference interpreting in Brazil: a history of its professional practice and the training of Brazilian interpreters” (Pagura 2010)

² “Interpreters in their professional environment. For a stronger voice” (Atkinson 2006)

expert interviews that Atkinson analyses employing Gideon Toury's translation norms as well as Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and *field*. She describes the attitudes and beliefs of interpreters related to their professional activity and their relations to other agents and concludes that there are indications for the existence of a shared *habitus* among professional interpreters in Rio de Janeiro, fostered by the professional associations as well as the training institutions. This *habitus* involves acting in a discrete manner as well as being adaptable. She also concludes that the profession can be seen as a field or sub-field in formation. Among the translation norms identified is the preponderance of the language combination Portuguese – English and the professional norms established by the ethical code of the professional association. Despite providing some contextual information, this master's thesis was only partially relevant for the present study, not least due to its geographic limitation to the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Denise de Vasconcelos Araujo's master's thesis, *Os cursos de formação de intérpretes no Brasil e as melhores práticas da Associação Internacional de Intérpretes de Conferência: um caminho para a profissionalização*,³ defended at PUC-Rio in 2017, deals with one important aspect of professionalization: training institutions. An overview of the history of conference interpreter training in Brazil is provided and attention is drawn to the prominent role of AIIC in this process. Araujo conducts a survey of the *status quo* of conference interpreter training around the country and compares the curricula and practices of the existing courses with the best practices of AIIC. The master's thesis comes to the conclusion that interpreter training in Brazil is currently undergoing a process of increasing professionalization.

As discussed in a later chapter, interpreting studies has been gaining momentum in Brazil over the past years and a couple of other publications that have recently emerged in that context also proved useful for the present study. Branca Vianna's (2015) paper *A atuação do Comitê de Formação e Atualização Profissional da AIIC no novo panorama de ensino e pesquisa no Brasil*⁴ deals with AIIC Training and how it contributes to the professionalization of conference interpreting globally by focusing on the training of trainers. The paper provides an overview of the activities of AIIC Training both in South America

³ "Interpreter training courses in Brazil and the best practices of the International Association of Conference Interpreters: a path towards professionalization" (Araujo 2017)

⁴ "The work of the AIIC Training and Professional Development Committee in the new panorama of training and research in Brazil" (my translation).

generally and in Brazil specifically. It also analyzes the development of conference interpreter training in Brazil over recent years and discusses the emergence of interpreting studies in that country and provides a list of relevant studies.

Raffaella de Filippis Quental's (2018) paper *Formação de Intérpretes na PUC-Rio: meio século de história*⁵ provides a historical overview of the development of one of the country's most traditional training institutions. It includes detailed information on the different stages the training programme went through over the course of half a century. The paper provided valuable information for the chapter on PUC-Rio of the present thesis.

Apart from the studies mentioned above, not much attention has been given specifically to aspects of professionalization. Facing the given circumstances, conducting original research seemed the only viable way forward. This was also the approach that Pagura (2010), Atkinson (2006) and Araujo (2017) opted for, evidently due to a lack of other sources.

⁵ "Interpreter training at PUC-Rio: half a century of history" (translation by the author)

4 Methods

Far from precluding the possibility of scientific research, which continues to be associated with notions like ‘factual evidence’ and ‘objectivity’, the relativistic view of reality and knowledge enables the researcher to strive for insights which hold up to intersubjective examination while continuously reflecting on the inescapable humanness of scientific inquiry. This makes objectivity a social endeavor, informed by our individual subjectivity (see Babbie 1999:36). Hence the need for researchers to make explicit their theoretical perspective and conceptual as well as methodological choices. (Pöchhacker 2004:61)

The objective of this thesis is to investigate, explore and present findings on the professionalization of conference interpreting in Brazil by seeking to provide meaningful answers to the research questions outlined in the Introduction. The research methods adopted have been chosen in accordance with this objective. They consist in a literature review on the one hand and in conducting and analysing qualitative expert interviews on the other. Combining these two approaches, a strategy of methodological triangulation has been chosen.

4.1 Triangulation

The term *triangulation* derives from marine navigation and refers to the fact that the exact position of a vessel can only be determined if the position of two external points is known, thus creating a triangle of the three positions. This idea has been adopted by the social sciences, where *triangulation* with regard to the methods employed refers to the use of more than one method in an enquiry into any empirical phenomenon.

No single method is always superior. Each has its own special strengths and weaknesses. It is time for sociologists to recognise this fact and to move on to a position that permits them to approach their problems with all relevant and appropriate methods, to the strategy of methodological triangulation (Denzin 1970:471, as cited in Blaikie 1991:116).

The approach of using methodological triangulation for this research project concretely implies the employment of a synthesis of two methods: a literature review and ensuing interpretative document analysis and semi-structured expert interviews with a corresponding qualitative content analysis. In a sense, triangulation consists in “checking interview material against other sources of data” (Edwards 2015:211) in this context. Due to the nature of the

inquiry and considering the availability of sources, a degree of lopsidedness towards interview material will be unavoidable.

4.2 Document analysis

The results of the literature review have been presented in the previous chapter. The method adopted for extracting relevant information from the identified literature was a qualitative and interpretative document analysis (Mayring 2010:33). It is characterized by an intensive and personal analysis and encompassing interpretation of the document (Atteslander 1971, as cited in Mayring 2010:49). One of the advantages of this qualitative method is that there is a lower risk of subjectivity and bias than is the case with the collection of original data, since it allows for a non-reactive form of measurement in which the behaviour and/or answers given by respondents is not influenced by the researcher (Mayring 2002:47). According to Mayring, it is this non-reactivity of documents that allows for document analysis to help evaluate the validity of data collected by other methods. On the other hand, the method does not allow for any assertions to be made regarding the opinions and attitudes of the respondents that provide the information on which the documents are based.

4.3 Expert interviews

Faced with a scarcity of pertinent publications, expert interviews were conducted to collect relevant data. The methods applied for conducting these expert interviews followed what Edwards & Holland (2013:29) summarizes as semi-structured interviews:

In a typical semi-structured interview the researcher has a list of questions or series of topics they want to cover in the interview, an interview guide [...], but there is flexibility in how and when the questions are put and how the interviewee can respond. The interviewer can probe answers, pursuing a line of discussion opened up by the interviewee, and a dialogue can ensue. In general the interviewer is interested in the context and content of the interview, how the interviewee understands the topic(s) under discussion and what they want to convey to the interviewer. Basically these interviews allow much more space for interviewees to answer on their own terms than structured interviews, but do provide some structure for comparison across interviewees in a study by covering the same topics, even in some instances using the same questions.

The expert interviews were conducted along these lines. While the interview questions (see Annex I) served as a guideline, a significant degree of flexibility was maintained so that the conversations could dwell and expand on topics of the individual interviewees' expertise.

A total of 16 professional conference interpreters were interviewed for this study. A majority of these interviews were conducted in person, six in Rio de Janeiro and nine in São Paulo. One interviewee was based in Brasilia and the interview was conducted via Skype. A precondition to being included in this data collection was that the individual considered him or herself a 'professional conference interpreter.' One interpreter considered herself at the beginning of her career, four were young interpreters with less than ten years of experience in the field, eight were professionals who have been active in the profession for decades and one considered herself retired. Among these professionals, all of the professional associations were represented: APIC, AIIC, ABRATES as well as the trade union SINTRA. One was among the founding members of APIC and acted as the South America representative of AIIC for many years, one is the current Secretary General of SINTRA, others spent years working on the executive boards of APIC and ABRATES, others again are important figures in conference interpreter training. Despite the shortcomings discussed in the chapter on Limitations, on the whole a broad range of knowledge, experience and perspectives were covered by the selected group of interviewees.

The approach to conducting expert interviews for the present study has been enriched by elements used in oral history, the methodological approach chosen by Pagura (2010) for the thesis cited above. The methods of oral history are of course often employed to record the lives of historically significant individuals or of unique individual perspectives on historically significant events. Nevertheless, they provided some interesting additional dimensions. Just like oral history, the object of this study consists in individual memory and perception (Richie 2003:103). Richie (2003:84) quotes Studs Terkel, according to whom the trick to a successful interview is "engaging in conversation, having a cup of coffee." According to Richie, in order to attain the required information from an interviewee it is advisable to make the person feel comfortable and relaxed by creating a positive rapport and by encouraging the conversational flow by giving specific non-verbal signs during the interview, "such as nodding." Much of what Richie and others offer as guidelines for the conducting of qualitative interviews seems like common sense, but in any case it enriched the methodological framework.

Part of the rationale for Pagura's (2010) research methodology was based on a self-conception as an 'insider.' Pagura himself had been active as a conference interpreter on the Brazilian market and can thus be considered as pertaining to the same social group as the experts he interviewed. Another example of qualitative research of an 'insider' in the realm of translation studies is the study conducted by Koskinen (2008) on the institutions providing translation services for the European Union. Reflecting upon my own status as a graduate student from Austria conducting research in Brazil brings me to the conclusion that a 'semi-insider' status would be a suitable description. On the one hand, I do pertain to the field. Being a budding conference interpreter and having practically completed a master's degree creates an almost automatic bond with other conference interpreters that can range from a mere sharing of the same body of knowledge to a sense of mutual solidarity and belonging to the same professional group. At the same time, I am neither Brazilian, nor have I shared a booth with any of the professional conference interpreters interviewed. Thus, different from being an outright 'insider researcher,' for this project I consider myself a 'semi-insider.'

4.4 Analysis of interview data

The data collected from the interviews was subjected to a qualitative content analysis. According to Bogner *et al.* (2014:72), when it comes to extracting information from expert interviews this method is a valid approach. Of course it is legitimate to question whether statements given by experts in interviews can be taken as 'hard' facts or whether they are to be considered constructs that are based on interpretations and must again be subjected to the researcher's interpretation (Bogner *et al.* (2014:72). Content analysis conceptualizes expert knowledge as a collection of information, which might at times be selective and contradictory, which is why more than one interview is to be conducted. However, it can be assumed that expert knowledge is capable of providing a correct representation of the world. Bogner *et al.* (2014:72) argue that while this might seem naïve from an interpretative-constructivistic perspective, when the objective of the research is to gather information, this approach is only functional. This type of analysis allows for the reconstruction of social facts in the sense of finding out the truth about certain conditions or processes. By systematically

analysing and comparing information provided by experts, the researcher attempts to discover causal relationships.

Referring to Gläser and Laudel as well as Mayring (2000), Bogner *et al.* (2014:73) propose the five steps for qualitative data analysis described below. This methodological approach was employed for the analysis of the data collected for the present study and will be presented both in terms of the method as described by Bogner *et al.* (2014) as well as Mayring (2010:58 *et seq.*) and with regard to how it was applied for this study.

4.4.1 Research question and selection of material

In a first step it is important to clarify the main research question which determines the perspective from which the data collected from the expert interviews is to be read. The research question determines which aspects of the content of the interviews is relevant for the study and is often accompanied by a number of secondary research questions. Subsequently it must be determined which material is to be analysed, i.e. a corpus must be defined.

The introduction of this thesis states the main and secondary research questions that guided this investigation from the beginning. The interviews were recorded and subsequently analysed. The corpus for this study consists in all information provided by the respondents that proved to be in any way relevant to the main and secondary research questions. The selection of experts to be interviewed was a function of the circumstances discussed in the chapter Limitations at the end of this thesis.

4.4.2 Creation of a system of categories

In a second step, a system of categories is developed, along with a conceptualization of their relations among one another. This system of categories generally emerges from a model developed in accordance with the relevant academic literature. The variables of the model represent the categories on the basis of which the corpus is analysed for relevant information.

Although these categories are predefined, they are open to alteration during the process of analysis.

For the present study, these categories are the ‘key professionalization indicators’ developed on the basis of Tseng’s professionalization model. They represent the *ex ante* system of categories which served for the analysis of the interview data in order to find meaningful answers to the research questions.

4.4.3 Extraction

In this step, the raw data is examined for relevant data and matched with the predefined categories. The objective of this step is to transform the data of the different original sources into an integrated informational foundation, because it is precisely this information that contains the key to answering the research questions. Since the decision on whether any piece of information contained in the original data is relevant or not is based entirely on the interpretation of the researcher, the extraction process is the main interpretative step of this method.

The extraction of the data for this study was done by listening and re-listening to the recorded interviews and analysing their informational content with regard to the research questions and more specifically the predefined categories. While the irrelevant information was discarded, those elements relevant to the study were either translated and quoted directly or their informational content was paraphrased, citing the corresponding source.

4.4.4 Processing of data

This step consists in consolidating the dispersed pieces of information contained in the data and reducing redundant information.

Step 4 was put into practice by enriching the individual subchapters of the analytical parts of this thesis with the quotes and paraphrased content extracted from the interviews in step 3.

Information that had been provided by more than one respondent was summarized and the individual interviews from which the information was derived were cited accordingly.

4.4.5 Analysis

The final step consists in seeking answers to the research questions on the basis of the processed data in the light of causal relationships between different elements contained in the data. This interpretative step consists in a movement away from the level of reported causalities towards the level of real causalities.

In this thesis, answers to the secondary research questions are provided along the different subchapters of chapter 6, Professionalization: stages and trends. Chapter 7, Conclusion and discussion, summarizes the research findings and attempts to provide answers to the main research question.

In order to respect the anonymity of the interviewees, the sources providing the data on which this study is based are cited in the form of “I-1” for “Interview-1,” “I-2” for “Interview 2,” etc. The 16 interviews are numbered according to the chronological order in which they were conducted.

5 Conference interpreting in Brazil

The present chapter is intended to offer an overview of the profession as it is exercised in Brazil. It begins with a historic contextualization which is mostly based on research conducted by Pagura (2010). Thereafter, a number of important dimensions are discussed, dimensions with regard to language and geography, the question of race as well as different aspects of the interpreting market in Brazil. The chapter closes with a discussion of the growing role that agencies play on the market.

5.1 Brief history of conference interpreting in Brazil

Pagura's (2010) research concludes that the oldest record of a large international conference with conference interpreting on Brazilian soil is that of the Pan-American Conference of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Rio de Janeiro in 1947. This conference gave rise to the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, the so-called Rio Treaty (Pagura 2010:70). According to this source, the most prominent interpreter of the event was a military attaché of the US embassy, Vernon Walters. It can be taken for granted that Walters interpreted mostly in the consecutive mode.

In 1948, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) held a conference on hospital organization in Rio de Janeiro. On this occasion, equipment for simultaneous interpretation was first used in Brazil. The IBM equipment was brought from and taken back to the United States. This conference made Carlos Peixoto de Castro, who had never interpreted before in his life, the first simultaneous interpreter of Brazil.

Over the following years, a small informal group of conference interpreters formed around Edith van de Beuque in Rio de Janeiro. The interpreter of French origin had studied in Georgetown, at the school founded by Léon Dostert after he had been responsible for organizing the simultaneous interpreting for the Nuremberg Trials.⁶ Apart from interpreting, van de Beuque organized and administered numerous events and it is fair to say that during

⁶ On the early years of conference interpreting in Europe, see Baigorri-Jalón (2014).

the 1950s and 60s, alongside Peixoto de Castro, she was one of the key figures of conference interpreting in Brazil and instrumental in introducing the profession in the country.

It is interesting to note that during these early stages in the development of the profession in Brazil there was an active collaboration with interpreters from Argentina. Since there were no interpreters of Spanish in Brazil and a corresponding lack of Portuguese interpreters in Argentina, exchanges took place when the respective language was required (Pagura 2010:72).

Parallel to the events in Rio de Janeiro, a group of interpreters started forming in São Paulo, the financial capital, economic powerhouse and largest city of Brazil. This group around interpreters such as Ursula Schneider, Ingrid Orglmeister, Sylvia Nóbrega, Heloísa Martins-Costa and Jacqueline Branco, in 1971, created the first professional association of conference interpreters, APIC (*Associação Profissional de Intérpretes de Conferências*; originally, the organization was called *Associação Paulista de Intérpretes de Conferências*, or Conference Interpreters' Association of São Paulo, using the same acronym, APIC).

Another important pioneer of conference interpreting in Brazil was Ângela Levy, who in the early 1950s worked at the *União Cultural Brasil - Estados Unidos*, a language and cultural institute in São Paulo. As was the case with other pioneers in the field, she had of course received no specific training when she started interpreting, but with time she became an established professional who also accompanied Robert Kennedy on his visit to Brazil in the 1960s. From 1970 onwards she dedicated her work to the training of interpreters at the institution she founded in São Paulo, *Associação Alumni*.

1954 was an important year for conference interpreting in Brazil, since the 400th anniversary of the city of São Paulo brought numerous events with a need for interpreting services to the city over the course of practically the entire year. Many interpreters began their careers in the course of these events. During the 1960s, most of the events relevant for interpreting were held in Rio de Janeiro and the group around Edith van de Beuque tended to take charge. In São Paulo, no more than a dozen relevant events were held per year (Pagura 2010:83).

The beginning of the 1970s then saw a decisive and multifold impetus for the professionalization of conference interpreting in Brazil. The first two major training

institutions were founded, *Associação Alumni* in São Paulo and the course at the university *PUC-Rio (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro)*. The establishment of the first professional association was of course a major milestone for the development of the profession in Brazil. An increasing number of international events requiring interpreters were held in the country. In subsequent years the profession developed further and the market for interpreting services grew, particularly in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília.

The interpreting profession grew by leaps and bounds in the 1980s and 1990s and into the twenty-first century, with the Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo interpreters working all over the country, since many international conferences began to be held in Brazil. (Pagura 2012:320)⁷

Other important milestones for the profession were the establishment, in 1988, of SINTRA (*Sindicato Nacional dos Tradutores*), the national trade union of translators and interpreters, and in 1999 of ABRATES (*Associação Brasileira de Tradutores*). Both these institutions, as well as other aspects of changes that have occurred in the profession over the years, will be discussed over the course of this paper.

Atkinson (2006:66) offers a summary of the development of the profession in Brazil over the decades:

[T]here are very positive signs that a professional *habitus* is consolidating. Over three decades the activity of interpreting in this country has moved away from being exercised randomly by untrained people to become an occupation of a group of professionals, mostly trained, committed to demand adequate working conditions and to raising quality standards. Considering the vast and obscure history of the activity, these changes arose over an extremely short period of time and are auspicious signs for a continuing consolidation of the profession.⁸

⁷ For more details, see Pagura (2012:315-321).

⁸ “[H]á sinais muito positivos de que um *habitus* profissional vem se firmando. Em três décadas, a atividade de interpretação nesse país deixou de ser exercida casualmente por pessoas sem formação para se tornar a ocupação de um grupo de profissionais, na maioria formados, engajados na exigência de condições adequadas de trabalho e a elevação de padrões de qualidade. Considerando a vasta e obscura história da atividade, essas mudanças surgiram num período extremamente curto, e são auspiciosos para a consolidação continuada da profissão.”

5.2 The language dimension

Nowadays, many more people understand foreign languages. (I-6)

There is wide agreement among the interpreters interviewed for this study that by far the number one language combination in conference interpreting in Brazil is English – Portuguese and interpreters generally work in both directions; monolingual booths hardly ever exist (I-6, I-12, I-15. See also: Araujo 2017:83, Pagura 2010:67 *et seq.*, Atkinson 2006:60). “*If you don’t have a retour into English you don’t work*” (I-2).

Pagura (2010:69 *et seq.*) judges Spanish to rank second, however far behind English. French has been losing significance over the past decades, along with other ‘smaller’ languages such as Italian and German. They are relevant mostly for events that are highly specific or promoted by entities such as embassies that require an interpretation into and from the respective national language. Due to this predominance of English, when this thesis deals with conference interpreting in Brazil, it is implied that what is referred to generally is the language combination Portuguese-English and *retour*.

Nonetheless, a few more words now on German since, after all, this thesis is to be presented at the University of Vienna. German in Brazilian conference interpreting is considered a rare language. As such it does well when the economy goes well (I-15). In 2013-2014, the initiative *Ano da Alemanha no Brasil*⁹ attracted numerous cultural, economic and political events that required interpreting from and into German. During the years of a prosperous energy sector in Rio, for example, German was also often required. In recent years, after the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016, the market for German has declined. There is also a tendency for the new generations of Germans that come to Brazil for conferences to speak English (I-15). Very frequently, at international events involving German nationals, simultaneous interpreting is offered only from and into English, a tendency that has been increasing over the past years, both in Rio de Janeiro and in São Paulo (I-7, I-15), even in the case of events and meetings organized by the German embassy and consulates in Brazil (I-16).

⁹ “Year of Germany in Brazil”

There is also a geographic element to the language dimension of German interpreting: most German interpreters are concentrated in Rio and São Paulo and most of them in São Paulo, which might be because, as *“people jokingly say, São Paulo is the second largest German industrial city”* (I-7).

5.3 The geographic dimension

In Brazil there are seven cities with over two million inhabitants and another ten cities have over one million (IBGE 2018). Considering this scenario, it is not surprising that there exist a number of different markets for conference interpreting across the country. However, the two largest cities, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, constitute the largest hubs for the profession (I-5).

During the very early days of the profession, Rio de Janeiro was still the capital city, until it was moved to Brasília in 1960. Rio has remained one of the major centres for conference interpreting of the country. Important sectors generating demand for interpreting services over recent years have been large international conventions on various topics, the oil and gas sector, environment, medicine, as well as political, economic and cultural events (I-5, I-15).

Beyond any doubt São Paulo is the largest interpreting market in the country, both in terms of the number of events and professionals (Pagura 2012:322). Its population is almost double that of Rio de Janeiro and it is known as the economic powerhouse of the country. The market in São Paulo has been shaped by business and industry, but also by scientific research, for example (I-6). The private sector drives São Paulo. *“[In São Paulo] there is more inclination towards professionalization, because the main driving force [...] in interpreting is the private sector, which has a different mentality [from the public sector]”* (I-5).

The interpreting market in Brasília is very much characterized by events related to government and state offices. Public tender and a mentality of seeking the lowest price is more common on the interpreting market of Brasília than in the other major hubs (I-5).

There is no surprise to the fact that the three main markets for conference interpreting in Brazil are also the three largest cities. São Paulo and Rio are the largest markets, whereas São Paulo is a lot larger than Rio (I-5). The professional associations are strongly represented in Rio, São Paulo and Brasília. These markets have many similarities and the communicate a lot. *“Of course in Brasilia there is a lot of work for the government [...] there is public tender which complicates the lives of the interpreters in Brasilia but the markets are similar”* (I-2).

In the Northeast of the country (which includes federal states such as Bahia, Pernambuco and Ceará, for example) there is a smaller market for conference interpreting (I-2). However, generally not much is known about interpreting in the Northeast among the professional interpreters interviewed in the Southeast (including Rio, São Paulo), where this study was conducted (I-1, I-3, I-4). According to Pagura (2012:320), the “Northeastern states of Brazil, with their endless beach resorts, are a major magnet for international conferences.” However, there are hardly any members of the professional associations based there, so it is assumed that in general interpreters of these regions are less professionalized than in the Southeast (I-2). However, *“there are a few people in Recife and Salvador who try to train the interpreters [to make them more professional]”* (I-2).

There is also a market for conference interpreting in the South of the country, which includes the federal states of Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. Over half a decade ago, Pagura (2012:32) stated that “Porto Alegre, the capital city of Brazil’s southernmost state, also has a thriving group of interpreters, who have considerable work due to the number of industries in the area, which attract a large number of events.” The current situation on this market could not be ascertained. However, there seem to be indications that this market is growing (I-2). The interviews for this study were conducted with interpreters based in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, so inevitably the perspective that this paper will gain on the profession in Brazil will be influenced by this geographic angle, focusing on the largest and most important markets.

5.4 Race and conference interpreting in Brazil

Another important dimension to be taken into consideration when exploring the conference interpreting profession in Brazil is race or skin colour. Brazil, a country where slavery was abolished only in 1888, has a long and complicated history of racism and racial segregation. In this context, it is important to draw attention to the fact that professional conference interpreters in Brazil are almost exclusively of white descent (I-12) and that “*very few black people have access to the profession*” (I-1).

Currently, there are some initiatives to draw attention to this fact and to contribute to making the profession more inclusive. For one thing, articles on this issue have been published, for example in the translation journals *Tradução em Revista* (Fonseca 2018) and *Translatio* (Fonseca 2017). In 2017, this latter journal dedicated an entire issue to the topic of translation and black diasporas. Both the above mentioned articles feature interviews with some of the few professional interpreters of African descent, giving them voice to share some of their experiences being non-white professional conference interpreters working in almost exclusively white settings such as luxury hotels.

On October 20th, 2018, a project called *ABRATES Afro* was officially launched. It arose from the efforts of a young and ambitious Rio-based translator and conference interpreter of Afro-Brazilian descent.

This year I proposed to ABRATES a project called ‘ABRATES Afro,’ which is intended to include black people into the markets for translation and simultaneous interpreting in Brazil. Generally there are very few black people active [in these professions]. I know of about twelve people in all of Brazil, three [of which] are in Rio. The focus of this initiative is to include black professionals into the profession, and also to spread information about the profession to the wider public and particularly among the language departments of the universities. (I-1)

This initiative and the above mentioned publications are indications of a rising level of awareness as well as of the potential for change towards making the profession more

inclusive. At the same time, they are expressions of a sense of self-reflection occurring within the profession.

5.5 Dimensions of the market

This chapter turns to a number of specific dimensions related to the markets for interpreting services in Brazil. First of all, it is important to note that there are no staff positions for interpreters at public institutions in Brazil (I-15) and interpreters work almost exclusively as freelancers (Pagura 2019:66). Since the market is very diverse, interpreters must be prepared to work on a broad field of topics and this is particularly the case for smaller languages (I-1, I-15). The present chapter aims to demonstrate that there is a vertical segmentation of the market based on fees charged. Another dimension is discussed that is crucial to the profession: the effect of economic and political cycles as well as the impact of the current crisis. Finally, the issue of agencies and their impact on the market and the profession is raised.

5.5.1 Market strata

There seems to be a strong consensus among the interviewees that there are a number of different market strata or segments with regard to fees charged and/or possibly also the quality of the service offered (I-1, I-4, I-7). Sometimes these market segments are referred to as ‘markets A, B and C,’ whereas more pejorative names are also at times used for the lower-end market.

“There is no doubt that these different market strata exist, and interpreters generally know who works in which market segments” (I-9). In general, these segments are mostly distinguished by the fees charged by individual interpreters and not necessarily only by the quality offered or training received (I-9).

The term ‘market A’¹⁰ refers to the market segment that involves interpreters, who are mostly - but not exclusively - members of the professional associations APIC and AIIC and adhere to the corresponding standards of the profession in terms of working conditions and fees. It is the segment of the market that pays the highest fees and tends also to offer high quality service.

‘Market C’ is understood as involving individuals that speak languages and end up working as interpreters, often without ever having received any formal training. It can be assumed that among this segment there is little knowledge of or regard for the accomplishments of the associations, such as the ethical code of APIC, minimal standards for working conditions such as not accepting to work alone for any extended period of time and minimal fees to be charged. The following statement exemplifies the ‘market C:’ “[T]here are [...] people working as interpreters on the market that have no formal training in the field, such as English teachers, that work for a third of the reference prices” (I-9).

Somewhere between markets ‘A’ and ‘C’ there lies a market ‘B,’ which is difficult to define exactly. It can consist of individuals who have received formal training and/or have many years of experience and who offer fees considerably lower than what is recommended by the reference prices, for example as a strategy to find entry into and ensure presence on the market. Some people are prepared to enter the market at any cost and drag prices down (I-10). Apparently is “inevitable” that young people, for example, sometimes enter the market by undercutting prices (I-11).

The lines between the segments are by no means clear-cut and for a more differentiated insight into these market dynamics, specific research would be necessary. For the present purpose, suffice it to observe that these strata exist and that, despite touching upon some of the other markets, this paper deals mostly with what is considered ‘market A,’ that is, the service offered by highly qualified conference interpreters.

¹⁰ “Mercado A”

5.5.2 Economic / political cycles and crisis

Before discussing the susceptibility of the profession to cycles in the economic and political spheres and to the impact of the crises suffered by the country over the past years, a few words now on the seasonal nature of demand for interpreting services in Brazil.

The phenomenon of seasonality is surely not unique to the Brazilian context, but there is no doubt that demand for interpreting varies considerably with the seasons (I-4, I-8). During the summer months of December to March, there is generally less work for interpreters in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo - and for many sometimes no work at all -, it is the “*low season*” of the profession (I-1). The main season is from September to November, a time when many companies and organizations have budgets to spend before the financial year comes to an end.

Apart from the seasonal fluctuations, the sector depends a lot on the overall economic and political situation of the country (I-3). The following somewhat emphatic statement illustrates the extent to which the market for interpreting services in Brazil hinges on the overall state of the economy: “*If we want to know whether Brazil is doing well economically or not, it is not necessary to look at the stock market or at the exchange rate. It is enough to look at the translation and interpreting market*” (I-6).

Other interpreters have observed slowdowns in the market at specific points in time, for example after 9/11 (I-12). In consequence of the international crisis of 2008, many international events that would procure interpreting services were cancelled (I-4). However, “*the effects of that crisis did not last long*” (I-4). It has been observed that in times of crisis, interpreting “*is the first item to be cut and this is something we always felt, it is nothing new*” (I-16).

With regard to the current situation on the interpreting market, a majority of the interpreters interviewed agree that the market has suffered significantly as a consequence of political turmoil and economic stagnation after 2016. The economic and political crises in Brazil significantly affected the interpreting profession. It led to an “*astronomical fall of the market*” (I-6). The anti-corruption initiative *Operação Lava Jato*, which uncovered

corruption scandals such as the one commonly known as *Petrolão* (which massively damaged the national oil company Petrobras), affected the economy of Rio de Janeiro, which had been heavily based on the oil sector, significantly. These developments in turn had a strong effect on the interpreting profession: *“Things were developing well and then suddenly everything stopped. Everything”* (I-16).

During the years of economic growth, a cycle that came to an end around 2016, there was a lot of demand for interpreting services and at times interpreters were lacking. Nowadays this is no longer the case (I-4, I-9, I-12). *“Interpreting and translating have always been very reliable indicators [for the overall economic situation] and over the past years there has really been a drastic fall”* (I-6). For example, less funds have been available for scientific research over the past years and correspondingly there has been a reduction in international events and thus a fall in demand for interpreting in this sector (I-6).

[The market] grew until the crisis hit, then it stagnated, it is not growing, and the number of interpreters grew slowly [...] more people arrived on the market and there begun to be a lack of work [...] All interpreters work less. [There has been] a significant reduction, mostly in Rio, I believe in São Paulo it was not as dramatic, in Rio [there was a reduction] of at least 30%. (I-3)

The effects of the crisis were twofold. On the one hand, there seems to have been an overall reduction of demand for interpreting services, i.e. fewer events than before as well as events having been reduced to a shorter duration than before (I-9). On the other hand, there has been a fall in the fees that clients are willing to pay interpreters (I-9, I-15). Others agree that this crisis on the interpreting market has put downward pressure on prices. It has been observed people who are prepared to work for lower prices still got a lot of work in these crisis years (I-2). The recent development on the interpreting market has been described as a *“precarization of the working conditions”* (I-11). At times what occurs is what has been called an *“auction the other way round”* (I-11).

To a smaller extent and depending on the field of expertise, the crisis has also generated demand. Because of a tendency towards more legal actions during times of crisis, demand for court interpreters can increase (I-12).

Political instability is another factor that can affect the profession. As of 2016, the political instability and overall perceived security situation in Rio de Janeiro is likely to have been at least partially responsible for the decline in the interpreting market in that city (I-2, I-4, I-15). *“2018 has also been a year of decline”* (I-4).

5.5.3 Agencies

Now the market is being diluted, or maybe even deteriorated, by the agencies [...] I find it impossible [to protect] professionals from the competition of agencies [...] we as a group are too small. (I-10)

Over the past years, an increasing presence of agencies on the market for conference interpreting services in Brazil has been observed (I-6, I-9, I-10). When speaking of agencies, an important distinction is to be drawn, representing the understanding of a number of the interpreters interviewed: On the one hand, it is very common for interpreters' offices to pass on work to other interpreters not directly affiliated to the office. The interpreters' office often charges some administrative fee for having dealt with the client, but apart from this the sum paid by the client goes directly to the interpreter doing the job (I-9). This type of activity is not what is generally understood as that of an agency. Agencies are those companies that are often not owned or run by interpreters and that generally pay the interpreter significantly less for the job than what is paid by the client (I-9). *“Agencies are not necessarily run by interpreters but rather by business people. But also interpreters that maintain their own language services office have gained relevance, organizing their own work and that of external interpreters not directly connected to the company”* (I-12). The difference between agencies and interpreters' offices as been summarized in the following way:

The agency is a company whose owner [...] generally is not an interpreter, it is a businessperson that needs to earn money. It is an intermediary that contracts interpreters and deducts a certain sum to earn money and sustain the company. An [interpreter's] office is something much smaller [run by an interpreter...] There is an ethical code among us that the owner of the office deducts only [an administrative fee].

I believe the agencies are predatory¹¹ in the market [...] They need to achieve volume and attend in any way at the lowest price possible. (I-3)

There is a considerable margin to be earned and such agencies can easily be managed from home. Often, there is no diligence with regard to the quality of the service which is damaging to the profession as a whole, because clients may begin to think, that interpreting does not work altogether (I-8). *“Bad interpreting damages the profession as a whole because people will not think that a bad professional was hired, they will rather think that interpreting doesn’t really work” (I-8).*

Almost a decade ago, Pagura (2010:129 *et seq.*) already drew attention to the problems professional interpreters were facing due to the growing presence of agencies on the market. Agencies are a phenomenon that has been growing over the last 15 years (I-9), however there are indications that they might have gained momentum over the past few years. It has been observed that while agencies have existed for a long time on the market for written translation, agencies that contract interpreters are a phenomenon of the past three or four years in Rio de Janeiro (I-2). Agencies continue to be more present on the translation market than on the interpreting market (I-1, I-13).

There is a broad consensus among the interpreters interviewed that agencies are detrimental to the profession. Price has become an increasingly decisive factor on the market in detriment of quality (I-9). *“There are a lot more agencies nowadays with a detrimental effect on working conditions and fees. Nowadays one has to struggle much more to maintain working conditions” (I-14).*

“Somebody showed me an email of an agency that offered 400 reais¹² to work eight hours” (I-10). Not only do certain agencies often pay far below the recommended value, they also contract people to interpret alone for many hours (I-2), which is contrary to the ethical codes and regulations of APIC and AIIC.

Certainly, *“the market is truly free” (I-10).* Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of the individual interpreters not to accept such conditions. Agencies can only work this way

¹¹ See also: Pagura (2012:322).

¹² Less than 25% of the current reference value.

because there are people that accept their conditions (I-4). *“Interpreters have to have the courage and self worth not to accept these low fees that some agencies offer”* (I-9).

It has been highlighted that the true problem arises when agencies charge clients fees that undercut the reference prices, because such behaviour drags the entire market down. When there are players that systematically undercut the reference prices it becomes increasingly difficult to charge them (I-9).¹³ *“This is a direct impact that can be felt, because clients say [...] I would love to sign the contract with you, but I received an offer 40% cheaper”* (I-9).

Nowadays, it is common for agencies to win contracts for very large events, based on price and on the number of interpreters they are able to mobilise (I-12). However, agencies have not only been significant players on the private markets of Rio and São Paulo. For many years, the interpreting services rendered to the *Itamaraty*, the foreign ministry of Brazil, have been provided by agencies that subcontract interpreters. *“The federal government is a large contracting entity and follows a systematic policy of public tender seeking the lowest price [...] Undercutters have been taking over [...] Nowadays, the more professionalized segments of the market in Brasilia have been significantly reduced”* (I-5).

The ‘Itamaraty’ has been an important client for interpreters in Brasilia for decades. Traditionally, it had hired interpreters with the highest standards, generally members of the esteemed professional associations AIIC and APIC (see the chapter on Professional Associations for details).

Around the year 2011 or 2012, a new event company¹⁴ was awarded the contract and started paying lower fees, below what interpreters from the market A were willing to accept [...] So a new team of interpreters began working for Itamaraty [...] My perception is that the Itamaraty fell from A to B [...] The government always wants to achieve the lowest price via public bidding, and the service providers have been fighting to undercut each other for years (I-5).

Attention has been drawn to an interesting cultural dimension aggravating the effect of agencies on the market: namely a significantly lower propensity within the Brazilian culture

¹³ Regarding reference prices, see the chapter on SINTRA.

¹⁴ By the name of *Una Eventos*.

to complain, compared with the other Spanish speaking countries of the continent for example. According to this perspective,

foreigners that come here and listen to English will rarely complain, because they are happy, being in a Third World country, to understand anything at all [...] This is really bad for us: there is no feedback. And if there is no feedback, then everything went fine. So if the owner of an agency sends somebody completely unprepared that does terrible work and doesn't receive feedback, he will send that person again [...] They get away with it [...] They stay on the market for years. (I-9)

6 Professionalization: stages and trends

The present chapter offers a data-based analysis and discussion of the professionalization of the profession of conference interpreting in Brazil. It attempts to provide an assessment of recent developments and achievements of the profession in light of the stages and components of Tseng's professionalization model. The research behind this paper has put specific emphasis on the key indicators of professionalization highlighted in the chapter. Theoretical foundations and the present chapter is structured in line with these indicators. The final sub-chapter deals with an Outlook for the future of the profession in Brazil.

6.1 Consensus and commitment

I always say to my students: if one wins, we all win. (I-15)

This subchapter seeks to explore the question of whether there exists a consensus among professionals and a commitment to the development of the profession. Questions of consensus and commitment among any group of people *per se* entail some element of vagueness. This variable is difficult to quantify and will inevitably remain subject to interpretation. Nonetheless, consensus and commitment are key elements of the professionalization process according to Tseng and there are indeed some decisive assertions to be made on this issue.

Based on the data collected for this study, the question whether there exists consensus and commitment among professionals can be answered in the following way: 'Yes, in part.' Undeniably, certain individuals and groups of interpreters share values of professionalism, agreements on maintaining standards and a consensus regarding the importance of and a commitment to strengthening the profession. However, this can definitely not be said about all interpreters active on the market. What tends to exist is "*intra-group solidarity*" (I-1).

Many interpreters work in a spirit of collaboration. There are networks of interpreters that work together and recommend each other. They work towards maintaining fair standards and rates. However, this is not the reality of the market at large. For example, there are graduates

that are competent but do not maintain the standards and end up creating a grey market, which is cheaper but still offers decent quality (I-3, I-4).

The state of the economy also affects the level of cohesion among interpreters. The worse the market, the more situations arise where there is a lack of cohesion and solidarity (I-2). *“We are all friends, we are colleagues, but we are competitors”* (I-2).

The majority of interpreters interviewed agree that competition based on price is a reality of the market, also within the same segment (I-1, I-4, I-9). *“There was always competition for price, but it became worse due to the economic crisis in the country [...and] there are a lot more interpreters than before”* (I-2). Over the past years, a process of price flexibilisation has set in. Until around 2016 professional interpreters tended not to be very flexible with the fees they charged. Nowadays it has become increasingly difficult to maintain fees and some flexibility has become necessary in order to be contracted. Granting small discounts to clients has become acceptable within the community of association members (I-2, I-3).

Despite the competition, there definitely exists a sense of class identity and cohesion among professional interpreters in Brazil. The idea that common interests must be maintained and protected came up repeatedly over the course of the interviews. This attitude can be summarized by the following statement: *“I believe that if I go below a certain price, everybody loses”* (I-8).

To create more cohesion among professionals it is necessary to create awareness constantly (I-7) and *“a vital role”* (I-2) in this respect goes to training institutions, the topic of the following chapter.

6.2 Training institutions

For forty years, not much changed and the majority of interpreters entered the market via the old scheme of master-apprentice. In other words, the profession did not professionalize, at least not in the sense of the training of its practitioners. Also, little was known about the exercise of interpreting in Brazil, academic research in the field was non-existent and the conferences were dominated by Translation Studies, a field with a long and respected tradition. Over the past five years, however, we are witnessing a slow transformation of this panorama. There has been a renewed interest not only in the training of interpreters, with the emergence of new courses, but

also in academic and non-academic research in interpreting. (Vianna, 2015, as cited in Cavallo & Reuillard 2016:366)¹⁵

Beyond any doubt, training institutions play a key role in the process of professionalization, as has been thoroughly discussed in the chapter on Tseng's professionalization model. The present chapter is intended to give an overview of the institutions offering conference interpreter training in Brazil, with a particular focus on the more traditional and prestigious programmes as well as on the tendencies that can be observed in the field.

According to research conducted by Araujo (2017),¹⁶ eight conference interpreter training courses existed in Brazil around the year 2016. Of these, five courses were non-academic professional training courses¹⁷ and three were postgraduate specialization courses.¹⁸ Six of the eight courses were located in Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo, one in Recife and one in Curitiba (see also Vianna 2015:7 *et seq.*). Apart from these eight, there were also ten undergraduate programmes offering combined diplomas in translation and interpreting, nine of which were located in the federal state of São Paulo. *"Many universities teach [combined] undergraduate degrees in translation and interpreting"* (I-12). However, according to Vianna (2015:8) these undergraduate programmes do not play any significant role in the conference interpreting market [segment A], which is the reason why this paper will not deal with them in any more detail.

In Brazil, there is no public institution offering conference interpreter training (I-1, I-15). Among the most prestigious and selective interpreter training courses currently existing there is the PUC University in Rio de Janeiro and the private professional training institution *Associação Alumni* in São Paulo. One of the subchapters of this chapter is also dedicated to PUC-São Paulo, which offered an important course in the field for many years that has recently been closed down. Apart from these institutions, there are also a number of private

¹⁵ *"Durante quarenta anos, pouca coisa mudou e a maioria dos intérpretes entrava no mercado no antigo esquema mestre-aprendiz. Em outras palavras, a profissão não se profissionalizou, ao menos não no que se refere à formação de seus praticantes. Também pouco se sabia sobre a prática da interpretação no Brasil, a pesquisa acadêmica na área era inexistente e os congressos eram dominados pelos Estudos da Tradução, uma área com longa e respeitada tradição. Nos últimos cinco anos, porém, estamos testemunhando uma lenta transformação desse panorama. Houve um interesse renovado não apenas pela formação de intérpretes, com o surgimento de novos cursos, mas também pela pesquisa acadêmica e não acadêmica em interpretação."*

¹⁶ For more details on this topic, see Araujo's (2017) master's thesis on conference interpreter training in Brazil.

¹⁷ *"Cursos livres e sequenciais"* (Vianna 2015:7).

¹⁸ *"Cursos de especialização lato sensu"* (Vianna 2015:7).

interpreter training schools as well as initiatives by professional conference interpreters who offer training for novices as well as further education courses for professionals wishing to enhance their skills. It is interesting to note that in the capital city, Brasília, there is no specific postgraduate course in conference interpreting (I-5).

Since the profession is not regulated in Brazil, there is no specific legal framework for professional training. Neither is professional training a prerequisite to entering the market and offering interpreting services (Araujo 2017:10). The present chapter intends to provide an overview of the most relevant institutions offering conference interpreter training in Brazil and discusses some of the tendencies evident in this field. Of the training institutions studied by Araujo (2017:86), five apply final examinations in interpreting with an examination board. An individual chapter is dedicated to each of these five institutions: PUC-Rio, PUC-São Paulo, Associação Alumni, Brasillis and Interpret2b. In a separate chapter, other training institutions and initiatives are presented. The chapter closes with a discussion on conference interpreter training and its relation to professionalization.

6.2.1 PUC-Rio de Janeiro

The first ever conference interpreter training course in Brazil was launched at the PUC-Rio University in 1968 (Araujo 2017:41, I-3). In 2018, the year it celebrated its 50th anniversary, the programme continues to be one of the most prestigious and traditional conference interpreter training courses of the country. It is widely recognized as a reference in the market (Pagura 2010:165).

The training of interpreters in Brazil is inseparable from the history of the profession in the country. According to Quental (2018), this relationship is particularly relevant for PUC-Rio. Many of the interpreters that helped to create the market for conference interpreting that exists today in Rio were graduates of PUC.¹⁹ “A list of graduates from this institution would

¹⁹ “Vale lembrar também que a história da formação de intérpretes no Brasil é indissociável da história da profissão no país, o que ganha ainda maior relevância no caso do curso da PUC-Rio, que produziu uma parcela considerável dos intérpretes que ajudaram a configurar o mercado do Rio de Janeiro tal como é hoje” (Quental 2018:2)

be almost equivalent to a list of professional interpreters active in Rio de Janeiro²⁰ (Pagura 2010:165).

The programme at PUC-Rio began in the late 1960s with an almost direct relationship to the very early days of conference interpreting as a modern profession. Candida Bordenave was the first director of studies (Pagura 2010:76). She had come from the University of Georgetown, where she had studied under its founder Léon Dostert, pioneer and organizer of the interpreting service at the Nuremberg trials (Quental 2018:8-9). Over the years, the course at PUC-Rio evolved through various phases, from an undergraduate course to a professional training course until, in 2008, it finally made the transition into what it is today: a postgraduate specialization course²¹ (Araujo 2017:41). Ever since this transition, students have been required to write a final dissertation, thereby contributing research papers to the incipient field of interpreting studies (Vianna 2015:10 *et seq.*). The programme is mostly practical but does include one theoretical module on interpreting studies (I-15). As of 2012, the programme has been registered in the Interpreting Schools and Programmes Directory of AIIC, an online registry of training programmes that follow AIIC best practices.²² After the shut-down of the programme at PUC-São Paulo, PUC-Rio is currently the only conference interpreter training institution in South America to be included in the list (AIIC 2018a).²³

In general, the ties between this programme and the interpreting market have been close. Particularly in the early years of the programme, for instance, many of the graduates were absorbed by a company called *Intergroup*, founded by Regina Silveira and Sylvia Nobrega, in turn graduates of PUC and among the pioneers of the profession in Brazil. Thus, a bridge between academia and the market was formed which was to evolve into a distinctive characteristic of the programme. Due to this communication with the market, the course could also receive more qualified feedback to improve its service (Quental 2018:11). It can be argued that this type of relation between the market and a training institution further strengthens the consensus and commitment among professionals and may thus, drawing an analogy to our professional model, be represented by Arrow 5 in Figure 1.

²⁰ “*uma lista de ex-alunos da instituição seria quase equivalente a uma lista dos intérpretes profissionais em atuação no Rio de Janeiro*” (Pagura 2010:165).

²¹ “*Curso de especialização lato sensu.*”

²² For a discussion on the criteria to be included in the registry, see Araujo (2017:87 *et seq.*).

²³ PUC-São Paulo is still included in the list on the website (see AIIC 2018a), however *de facto* the programme no longer exists.

A more recent example of these ties between the market and academia, represented in this case by PUC-Rio, can be observed in an event organized in 2016, the “1st Conference Interpreting Forum of PUC-Rio: from the classroom to the market.”²⁴ Recent graduates presented their theses and professional interpreters were invited to share experiences at a round-table discussion. Simultaneous interpreting was offered by graduating students who thus had an opportunity to display their capabilities among peers. The event was repeated in 2017 (Quental 2018:22).

The trainers, almost all of them members of the two main interpreters’ associations (AIIC and APIC) maintain a close collaboration with the associations and often invite other members to discuss with their students issues relevant to training and the market, in addition to opening the doors of the institution to events of interest to the class.²⁵ (Quental 2018:22)

Currently, the programme is on hold. In 2018, the minimum number of students to start a new course was not achieved and it is likely that this is in part due to the crisis (I-3). The course is “*expensive*” (I-3) and there is no scholarship programme. The only training for interpreters offered by PUC-Rio at the time of writing is a practical further training course held once a week, which is a “*non-expensive*” course of 20 hours held from September to December 2018.

In order to better adapt the programme to the general profile of the student (I-15) - often professionals who seek further education to precipitate a career change - the number of classroom hours has been reduced to the minimum necessary to qualify as a postgraduate course in Brazil, 360 hours. Taking into consideration the possibilities offered by new technologies (laptops, video streaming on the internet, audio recording via mobile phones, etc.), the amount of classroom hours required by the course until 2014, of up to 500 hours, could be reduced significantly and students can practice the techniques learned in class at home (I-3).

²⁴ “*I Forum PUC-Rio de Interpretação de Conferência: da sala de aula ao mercado*”

²⁵ “*Os professores, quase todos membros das duas principais associações de intérpretes (AIIC e APIC), mantêm uma colaboração estreita com as associações e frequentemente convidam outros membros para discutir com seus alunos assuntos relevantes para a formação e o mercado, além de abrirem as portas da instituição para eventos de interesse da classe*” (Quental 2018:22).

6.2.2 PUC-São Paulo

Despite sharing a name with PUC-Rio, PUC-São Paulo is a totally independent institution (I-3). Starting in the year 2009, PUC-São Paulo offered a non-academic post-graduate degree²⁶ in conference interpreting (Pagura 2003:218). It was a very practically oriented diploma course with only one theoretical module over the course of one semester and requiring no academic research or final dissertation (I-12).

At the time of writing, this course has been shut down. PUC-São Paulo had suffered financial difficulties and the policies of a new administration implied the termination of a number of courses with few students, one of them being conference interpreting. As of 2016, applications for the course were no longer accepted. The last graduates left the institution in 2017 and that same year saw the course in conference interpreting at PUC-SP close indefinitely with no perspective of re-opening (I-9, I-12). *“It was a very good course and many of the new APIC members nowadays are graduates of PUC-SP [...] The admission procedures were demanding and those students that entered had potential or could develop their potential to become professionals” (I-12).*

Considering the profile of the teaching staff, consisting entirely of professional conference interpreters, the course is considered to have had a high quality (I-3, I-12).

6.2.3 Associação Alumni

Associação Alumni is a private education institution in São Paulo that offers non-academic professional training courses in translation and interpreting, as well as language courses. It was founded by one of the pioneers of the profession in Brazil and one of the very first professional conference interpreters of São Paulo, Ângela Levy. She trained translators and interpreters at this institution for 46 years, from 1971 to 2017, with an estimated 2,000 professional translators and interpreters graduating over this period (Levy 2018:101).

²⁶ “Curso sequencial”

Associação Alumni is one of the most traditional training institutions for conference interpreting in the country (I-15), the quality of which is generally esteemed. *“Alumni is an extremely traditional course in Brazil in the positive sense of the word. It has been training interpreters that enter the market for many years [...] It is a good course”* (I-3).

Originally, the institution was envisaged as a cultural club intended to foster a cultural and language exchange between the United States and Brazil. From the beginning, it had close ties to the US consulate in São Paulo. It soon developed into a successful language school and in 1971 began teaching translation and consecutive interpreting. The first interpreting booth for simultaneous interpreting was installed in 1978. Over the years, the course gradually evolved to what it is today: a professional training course of five semesters composed of over 20 individual modules (Levy 2018:57 *et seq.*).

Associação Alumni offers a number of different diplomas that are specific to interpreting and translation on the one hand and the language direction on the other (I-12). For example, one student may graduate with a diploma in translation from English into Portuguese only, another may graduate with a diploma in interpreting from Portuguese into English and vice versa.

Of all the traditional interpreter training schools, in 2018 Associação Alumni was the only one to open a new course in conference interpreting. As mentioned above, PUC-SP closed indefinitely and the postgraduate course at PUC-Rio is currently on hold. Similar to PUC-Rio, the courses offered by Associação Alumni are private and comparatively expensive (I-1).

6.2.4 Brasillis

Brasillis is a private education institution founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Apart from offering language courses, it also trains translators and interpreters, both in class as well as online. According to the website, 90% of Brasillis' students receive training online.

The course in interpreting is a non-academic professional and practical training course oriented towards the market (I-4). There is little doubt that the Brasillis training programme

does not enjoy the same prestige as the three aforementioned institutions, however it does train interpreters that end up managing to establish themselves on the market. *“Some of the interpreters that have come out of Brasillis and that work today [...] are very good”* (I-3).

In the early 2000s, Brasillis enjoyed a certain level of recognition in Rio. *“The course at PUC was always the main reference in Rio de Janeiro, [however, it was] very long, demanded a lot of time and dedication and it was very expensive”* (I-4). The cost of Brasillis is less than half that of PUC-Rio (I-1). With regard to the quality of the interpreter training offered by Brasillis, it has been noted that the total academic load is significantly lower than that of institutions such as PUC-Rio for example (I-16).

Apart from offering interpreter training, Brasillis also acts as an agency on the market with some important clients such as the national oil company Petrobras. Cases have been observed where interns were employed for interpreting assignments the company had won the contracts for (I-16), thereby contributing to tendencies discussed in the chapter on Agencies.

6.2.5 interpret2B

interpret2B is an online interpreter training course that offers individually tailored modules as well as a standardized two year training course. Language proficiency training is also offered. This 100% online course is interesting for a number of reasons. For one, the owners seem to be held in high regard by some professionals with many years of experience (I-2, I-3).

Online courses could be a tendency for the future (I-3). As will be discussed in a later chapter, many professionals consider that remote interpreting will gain importance in the future, i.e. that more and more interpreting assignments will be done remotely. In such a scenario, a company offering purely online interpreter training can be considered to be ahead of its time.

6.2.6 Other training courses

As mentioned above, no public university offers any training in conference interpreting. The private market for tertiary education in Brazil is fairly large and diverse. The private PUC universities are recognized for quality education. There is a plethora of other private universities, some of which have offered interpreter training in the past, for example the university *Ibero-Americana* in São Paulo, which was sold and absorbed by *Unibero*, which was then closed and turned into *Anhanguera* (I-1, I-6, I-12). No information could be obtained on whether this institution currently trains interpreters.

One university that continues to exist and that did offer conference interpreter training until recently is *Estácio de Sá*. For a number of years it was significant for the profession in that it not only trained conference interpreters, it was also one of only two institutions (the other being PUC-Rio) to provide an academic post-graduate training²⁷ that required a final thesis. Thereby, the private university based in Rio de Janeiro contributed to the small but growing corpus of academic research papers on interpreting in Brazil. This interpreter training programme was originally founded in 2011 at the former university Gama Filho (Vianna 2015:10) and was later moved to Estácio de Sá University (I-4, I-8, I-9). In 2018, the interpreting course was not held due to a lack of students (I-8). No information could be obtained on whether this course might reopen in the future.

Apart from the university courses and private professional training programmes mentioned above, a number of other private educational initiatives exist that offer conference interpreter training for novices as well as further training for professionals. It is often professional interpreters who launch such education initiatives (I-12). The number of options available for ongoing professional training is growing, however it is still very limited “*considering the level of specialization we need*” (I-4).

One such initiative gave fruit to the course *Versão Brasileira* in Curitiba, the capital city of the federal state of Paraná in the Southern region of the country. A professional Curitiba-based conference interpreter, Raquel Schaitza, for a number of years had been working and competing on the market with people offering interpreting services without ever having

²⁷ “*Especialização Lato Sensu.*”

received any formal training. At the time there were no possibilities for training in the city. With the intention of raising the level of interpreting in the South of Brazil, Schaitza got a master's degree in interpreter training in Geneva, returned to Curitiba and opened Versão Brasileira, the first interpreter training programme in the Southern region of Brazil (I-15).²⁸ It is a practical course oriented towards professionalization, students are taught how the profession works, how to prepare and which adequate working conditions to demand. The one-year programme is a mixture of a classroom and distance learning course, including modules with mandatory attendance as well as requirements to be fulfilled at home. During the second semester students send audio recordings to trainers who in turn send back evaluations and feedback (I-15). At the end of the course, the students engage in an intensive practice of one week, which is called Hi²T (High Intensity Interpreting Training). Hi²T is also open to professionals already established on the market, or for budding interpreters that want to improve their skills (I-1). It has been existing for about five years (I-4). *"There are a number of initiatives of this kind, but as far as I know the ones that have been around the longest are not older than ten years"* (I-4).

Another such private initiative, this time in the city of São Paulo, is called EPIC. It consists in a one-week intensive interpreting training course offered by professional interpreters. It is directed towards people that have already received formal training, are new to the market and want to enhance their skills (I-11). It focuses on interpreting techniques on the one hand and when it comes to interpreting into English it also involves an element of improving language capacity (I-8).

Hi²T and EPIC are private initiatives by established professionals that enjoy a certain level of peer recognition. Other courses also exist that would not qualify for this description.

"[T]here are [also "boot camp"] courses [...] that train interpreters in two months and the owner of these courses puts the people in the booth, charges X from the client, pays X minus 50% to the interpreter, so there is also an economic exploitation" (I-2). There are indications that over the past ten years *"there has been an improvement"* in interpreter training in Brazil (I-2). However, parallel to this improvement, more low quality courses have also sprung up.

²⁸ Comprising the Federal States of Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul.

6.2.7 Interpreting studies in Brazil

In his book *Fundamental Aspects of Interpreter Education*, David Sawyer emphasises the importance of research for the professionalization of interpreting:

[A] considerable effort is required in documentation for general research purposes. A comprehensive, centralized database of curriculum documents, including in particular program and course descriptions and other writings that normally remain unpublished, would create a sound material basis for international research on translator and interpreter education and contribute greatly to professionalization. (Sawyer 2004:29)

Conference interpreting as a topic of academic study is a relatively recent phenomenon in Brazil. The first national convention of translators took place in 1975 at PUC-Rio, at a time when translating and interpreting were still taught in an integrated course at that institution. At this encounter, as well as at the second national convention of translators held at the same venue ten years later, interpreting was hardly even mentioned (Quental 2018:16). Since that time, the participation of interpreters in academic events around translation has seen a steady increase, but it took until the mid 2000s for their presence to become more visible, after ABRATES (*Associação Brasileira de Tradutores*, the Brazilian Association of Translators) included “*e Intérpretes*” (and Interpreters) in its name. In 2013, USP (*Universidade de São Paulo*) hosted the first ever Brazilian Symposium on Interpreting Studies, SIMBI (*Simpósio Brasileiro de Interpretação*, see Quental 2018:16). Since 2015, the traditional annual congress of ABRATES has been dedicating one of the halls entirely to the subject of interpreting and this hall also includes interpreting booths that allow budding conference interpreters to practice and receive feedback from their more experienced peers.

Important traditional conferences on translation, such as those of ABRATES (*Associação Brasileira de Tradutores e Intérpretes*) and ABRAPT (*Associação Brasileira de Pesquisa em Tradução*) have begun to give more space for presentations on interpreting. In 2013, SIMBI (*1º Simpósio Brasileiro de Interpretação*) took place, a milestone in the incipient field of interpreting studies in Brazil. (Quental 2018:4)²⁹

Since 2010, there has been a transformation in the world of interpreting in Brazil. On the one hand, there has been a surge in interest in receiving interpreter training and an emergence of new training courses. On the other hand, academic and non-academic research on interpreting

²⁹ “Congressos importantes tradicionalmente voltados para a tradução, como os da ABRATES (*Associação Brasileira de Tradutores e Intérpretes*) e da ABRAPT (*Associação Brasileira de Pesquisa em Tradução*) passaram a dar mais espaço a apresentações sobre interpretação. Em 2013, houve a realização do SIMBI (*1º Simpósio Brasileiro de Interpretação*), um marco na área, ainda muito incipiente, dos estudos da interpretação no Brasil.”

has increased. Vianna (2015:3ff.) affirms that, with the aforementioned thesis published in 2010, Reynaldo Pagura inaugurated a new era, in which professional interpreters and students began to create databases of theses, dissertations and other papers presented at conferences.

Taking advantage of the resources offered by social media and online questionnaires, we begin to discover how many of us there are, how much we earn, where we are located, what we think about ourselves, how old we are, what training we have received, what our interests are, what working languages we have. This data [...] begins to create an incipient professional identity, around which the group can potentially become more cohesive and stronger.³⁰ (Vianna 2015:3-4)

Cavallo & Reuillard (2016:360) also record an increase in master's and doctoral theses in interpreting studies in Brazil over recent years. According to their research, a total of three theses were defended in the period 2006 - 2010. During the following period of five years, from 2011 to 2015, this number had risen to seven. Of course these numbers are still comparably low (in translation studies, around 260 master's and doctoral theses were defended in Brazil over the period 2006 - 2010 alone). However, they draw the conclusion that this change not only means an increase in interest and awareness of the importance of conducting research in interpreting studies, it also indicates an increasing recognition of the interpreter as a professional. Generally they see positive signs for the future of interpreting studies in Brazil as well as for a consolidation of the professional identity of interpreters.

Araujo (2017:55) agrees that there has been a “renewed interest in research [since 2010], motivated by a desire to know more about the background of interpreters in the country and also due to the publication of the final dissertations coming from the postgraduate interpreter training courses.”³¹

Vianna (2015:10) believes that this renewed interest in interpreting studies is mostly due to the dissertations coming out of the postgraduate interpreting courses offered by the two institutions mentioned above: PUC-Rio and the university Estácio de Sá. “On average,

³⁰ “Empregando os recursos oferecidos pela mídia social e questionários on-line, começamos a descobrir quantos somos, quanto ganhamos, onde estamos, o que pensamos de nós mesmos, que idade temos, qual é a nossa formação, interesses e idiomas de trabalho. Esses dados, por enquanto soltos e coletados, em alguns casos sem muito rigor acadêmico, começam a criar um princípio de identidade profissional, em torno da qual o grupo se torna potencialmente mais coeso e mais forte.”

³¹ “Aqui no Brasil, desde 2010, estamos vivendo um novo momento, com um interesse renovado em pesquisas, motivadas pelo desejo de conhecer mais os cenários de intérpretes no país e também com a publicação das monografias dos cursos de formação de intérpretes em nível de pós-graduação.”

around twenty students graduate from these two universities per year, which means twenty research papers on a wide range of topics” (Vianna 2015:11).³²

Despite this recent surge in interest, the field of interpreting research in Brazil is still at a very preliminary stage. According to Araujo (2017:13), not more than approximately 20 scholars do research on spoken-language interpreting in an academic context and researchers working on interpreter training are even fewer in number.

Quental, the academic coordinator of the prestigious postgraduate programme in conference interpreting at PUC-Rio, summarizes the current situation of Brazilian interpreting studies in the following manner:

[...] the new research field of interpreting studies, increasingly detached from translation studies, has expanded and matured, demonstrated by the consolidation of courses and by the number of events and relevant sessions in conferences and publications. The ‘training paradigm’ described by Mackintosh [...] is clearly established. Despite the fact that many aspects still lack research, the area of training today has a more solid structure and theoretical foundation [...].³³ (Quental 2018:22-23)

6.2.8 Training institutions and professionalization

Before delving into a discussion on what has emerged on interpreter training in Brazil and how this reflects what Tseng (1992) has laid out in his professionalization model, a few general remarks on the topic. First of all, a number of challenges are faced by the training institutions, for example the relatively small number of students which at times makes it difficult for the courses to maintain themselves (I-12). The language skills of students also pose challenges. At times there is a significant gap between A and B language proficiency, in part due to the fact that the large urban conglomerations in Brazil are to a large extent monolingual and that the neighbouring countries are far away (I-15). Hence, students have

³² “Essas duas universidades diplomam, em média, vinte alunos por ano, o que significa vinte trabalhos de pesquisa sobre os assuntos mais variados.” Currently, of course, this information is to be read in the past tense. As mentioned above, in 2018 neither of these institutions have interpreting courses running.

³³ “[...] o novo campo disciplinar dos Estudos da Interpretação, cada vez mais desvinculado dos Estudos da Tradução, tem tido uma trajetória de expansão e amadurecimento, evidenciada pela consolidação dos cursos e pelo número de eventos e sessões temáticas em congressos e publicações. O ‘paradigma de formação’ descrito por Mackintosh (1999), em artigo sobre a formação de intérpretes, está claramente estabelecido. Apesar de ainda haver muitos aspectos carentes de pesquisa, a área de formação é hoje mais estruturada e teoricamente fundamentada [...]”

fewer opportunities to train their language skills abroad than European students for example. Language skills have been among the greatest challenge in interpreter training in Brazil (I-6). Another challenge lies in the difficulty of receiving extended specific training on how to train interpreters.

Regarding the profile of interpreter trainers, the training staff at PUC, interpret2B, Versão Brasileira and Associação Alumni are generally professional interpreters. They are people who know the market, who know the profession [...], know about the difficulties and are constantly up to date with the profession. Offering access to this kind of information is an important element of quality interpreter training. However, aside from some notable exceptions, few interpreter trainers have received any extensive formal pedagogic training, particularly relative to the training of interpreters (I-15).

Araujo (2017:90 *et seq.*) also points out that in Brazil generally interpreter training is done by professional interpreters who expose students to the reality of the market. She argues that the teaching of theoretical content together with practical classes “allows the future interpreters to develop a metalanguage with respect to interpreting.”³⁴ Araujo, after having conducted her aforementioned research on interpreter training in Brazil, comes to the conclusion that interpreter training is undergoing a process of professionalization in Brazil, and that a lot of effort and studies are still needed to guarantee that interpreter training is done professionally and with quality.

There appears to have been an overall increase in training options over the past two decades (I-12). Despite this increase, Vianna (2015:8) concludes that “in a country like Brazil, with important markets in the South, the Northeast and in Brasília, eight courses,³⁵ six of them in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, is very little.”³⁶

The “common metalanguage” that students learn can be interpreted as a contribution to the consolidation of the profession, to a consensus and commitment regarding the profession, as represented by Arrow 5 in Figure 1. This argument is supported by Atkinson (2006:66): “The

³⁴ “*permitindo aos futuros intérpretes desenvolverem uma metalinguagem a respeito da interpretação.*”

³⁵ Vianna is referring to Araujo’s (2017) research which concludes that around the year 2016 a total of eight training courses in conference interpreting existed around the country.

³⁶ “*O que, sim, podemos afirmar é que, num país como o Brasil, com mercados importantes no sul, nordeste e também em Brasília, oito cursos, sendo seis entre Rio de Janeiro e São Paulo, é muito pouco*” (Vianna 2015:8).

main training courses also help in the formation of a shared *habitus*, teaching students about the importance of adequate working conditions and establishing quality standards and working methods.”³⁷

Regarding the history of some of the training institutions presented above in the theoretical context of the model, some empirical elements surely support the validity of the model for the case of Brazil. Traditional training institutions such as Associação Alumni and PUC-Rio, after they were founded around the early 1970s, definitely had a “positive influence [...] on practitioners in the market” (Tseng 1992:47) and it seems legitimate to say that thanks to the emergence of these institutions, “the shift [could] begin from *Phase I* to *Phase II*.”

Tseng (1992:47 *et seq.*) argues that “training institutions that are capable of producing top-notch practitioners are those established in universities as institutions of higher learning. For an emerging profession to register as a profession which possesses an esoteric body of knowledge [...] the training institutions must be affiliated with universities.” The examples of *Associação Alumni*, *Versão Brasileira* as well as *interpret2B* show that this argument does not necessarily hold for Brazil. These three institutions, *Associação Alumni* being one of the most traditional of all training institutions in the country, enjoy significant recognition by peer interpreters and as such surely contribute to and foster “an esoteric body of knowledge” and are “capable of producing top notch practitioners.” None of them is affiliated with any university.

Yet, it is true that the most important conference interpreter training programme in Rio de Janeiro has indeed been located at one of the most prestigious universities of the city. There is no doubt that PUC-Rio has equally contributed to passing on “an esoteric body of knowledge” to generations of graduates. There is also little space for doubt that as a university offering interpreter training over the course of half a century, PUC-Rio has contributed significantly to the professionalization process. However, in São Paulo *Associação Alumni* has been playing a similar role for the development of the profession without being affiliated to a university, so it remains unclear to what extent the fact that PUC-Rio is a university might have made a decisive difference to the extent that would support

³⁷ “Os cursos de formação principais também ajudam na formação de um *habitus* compartilhado, ensinando os alunos sobre a importância de condições de trabalho adequadas e estabelecendo padrões de qualidade e métodos de trabalho.”

Tseng's view. He goes on to state that "graduates from those training institutions are likely to nurture and cultivate the same vision for the market." Considering the profile of the interpreters that founded and run the private courses *interpret2B* and *Versão Brasileira* as well as the peer recognition they enjoy, there is no reason to believe that graduates from their training institutions might not "nurture and cultivate the same vision for the market" the same way that graduates from PUC-Rio might do. It can be argued that the capacity to cultivate similar views on the profession and the market among graduates depends more on the profile and level of professional commitment and dedication of the training staff than on whether the institution is in fact affiliated to a university or not.

The process of professionalization of the training institutions themselves, depicted as Arrow 4 in the model, is described by Tseng (1992:48) in the following manner:

(4) refers to the evolution of professional training institutions from low-end and low-quality schools to institutions that are really capable of producing competent professionals [...A]s the profession develops, the training schools must be able to adapt to the demand for quality services.

There is no data on which to base any kind of hypothesis regarding an objective improvement in the quality of the training offered at any of the institutions presented above. However, to the extent that peer recognition can be a valid indicator for the quality of education, a number of these institutions can be assumed to offer training of a decent quality. Nothing can be said of course about the quality compared to other countries or regions around the globe. In any case, it has been indicated that an overall improvement has been taking place in the quality of interpreter training offered in Brazil and that today the profession is very much supported by the training institutions (I-12).

At the same time, it can be argued that the "boot camp" interpreter training courses that have also emerged are an example for the 'Sources of Disturbance' indicated by Arrow 2.

Considering the professionalization model in Figure 1, it seems legitimate to argue that in Brazil both types of training institutions exist in parallel: those that consolidate consensus and commitment (Arrow 5) and nurture relations of mutual support and recognition with the professional associations (Arrow 7); and on the other hand those institutions that are further removed from the best practices laid out by the associations. By training interpreters and releasing them onto the market, possibly without due preparation, such institutions, in

collaboration with agencies more worried about achieving volume than minding quality, represent “Sources of Disturbance” (Arrow 2) on the market, particularly in times of crisis when price gains relevance over quality in market decisions. They can disturb the market by, on the one hand, contributing to a tendency of undercutting prices and, on the other, by contributing to a rendition of services of questionable quality, with a detrimental effect on the profession as a whole, as has been argued in the chapter on Agencies (I-8, I-9).

6.3 Professional associations

The market doesn't even know what APIC or AIIC are. The market knows who you are [...] the association is a reference for the professionals, not necessarily for the clients. It is there to create cohesion among the professionals, for everyone to speak the same language, to transmit the same message, to sell the same professionalism to the clients. (I-10)

Contrary to the situation Tseng (1992) was studying in the early 1990s in Taiwan, on the basis of which he developed his model, in Brazil conference interpreter is not emerging but definitely an established profession. This can, not least, be deducted from the amount of relevant professional associations: there is the national association APIC; the international association AIIC;³⁸ the national association of translators, ABRATES, which also counts many interpreters among its members and has become increasingly significant for the interpreting profession over the past years; and then there is SINTRA, a national trade union for translators and interpreters that, as will be demonstrated below, also shows a number of attributes typical of a professional association and is therefore included in this chapter.

6.3.1 APIC

APIC has played a fundamental role in the consolidation of the profession [...] they translated and adapted the rules of AIIC and they insisted on these rules, thereby strengthening the market. (I-10)

³⁸ “APIC and AIIC are the associations of conference interpreters par excellence [...] they are hallmarks of quality” (I-15).

The establishment of APIC³⁹ in July 1971 was a watershed in the professionalization of conference interpreting in Brazil. In general terms, AIIC was the blueprint on which the Brazilian association was molded. APIC created a professional code of ethics, established guidelines for suitable working conditions and defined specific criteria for the admission of new members into the association. According to Pagura (2010:85), the working conditions established by APIC have been of benefit to all interpreters in Brazil. Even interpreters that are not associated members benefit from the benchmarks established by the associations (I-10). As is the case with the other associations, all the work for APIC is voluntary (I-3).

Of the 158 professionals currently listed in the online interpreter registry on the APIC website, 95 are based in the federal state of São Paulo and 34 in the state of Rio de Janeiro (APIC 2018a). By contrast, of the interpreters registered in the online AIIC directory, 33 are based in Rio and 18 in São Paulo (AIIC 2018b). Traditionally, APIC has been more associated with São Paulo (I-5), where it was founded and where its office is located, and AIIC has had a stronger presence in Rio. However, the two associations are becoming increasingly unified and many interpreters are members of both associations (I-2).

One of the benefits APIC offers to its associated members is legal advice (I-15, I-16). APIC lawyers support members when they are having difficulties receiving fees from a particular client, for example (I-5). APIC also offers courses for further training, both in interpreting and in other areas relevant to the profession (I-12, I-16). The association provides an open forum for communication among interpreters and also sponsors the hall at the ABRATES conferences dedicated to interpreting (I-9). Another aspect of the association's relevance for professionals is that being a member sends a message to peers that one is taking the profession seriously (I-2).

Arrow 12 in Tseng's model represents the public relations work carried out by the association to benefit the profession by reaching out and making it more known. Although not much could be ascertained with regard to this area of APIC's work, the association's website is of course one major element of PR. At the time of writing, the website only works in Portuguese, but a number of interpreters have confirmed that a new website is in the pipeline

³⁹ As mentioned above, today APIC stands for *Associação Profissional de Intérpretes de Conferências* or "Professional Association of Conference interpreters." From its founding year until the 1990s, it used the same acronym but the name of the association was *Associação Paulista de Intérpretes de Conferências*, or Conference Interpreters' Association of São Paulo.

(I-3, I-9), along with a new logo (I-2). The importance of an easy-to-use online directory of interpreters for clients to find interpreters directly via the website has been pointed out (I-9). The research underlying this paper does not indicate any significant publicity work underway on the part of APIC, in the sense that Tseng laid out in his professionalization model as Arrows 12 and 17 in Figure 1.

Due to the significance of APIC as Brazil's first and only professional association of conference interpreters, this chapter goes into some detail to present and discuss the role this organization plays. After a brief historical overview, essential elements such as the ethical code, the regulation and the model contract are expounded. The chapter closes with a discussion of recent developments within the association, particularly a loosening of the accession criteria.

6.3.1.1 Brief history of APIC

This chapter will show that Tseng's (1992) professionalization model very much reflects the events around the establishment of APIC in 1971: In a state of market disorder, a potential training institution turned out to become a source of disturbance, which led to an aspiration towards consensus and commitment culminating in the establishment of a professional association. It might be said, in terms of Tseng's phase model, that *Phase II* was relatively brief in time and that in a sense almost a jump occurred from *Phase I* to *Phase III*.

According to the research conducted by Pagura (2010:83 *et seq.*), the creation of Brazil's first professional association of conference interpreters was in part precipitated by the construction of a large convention centre in São Paulo, the *Centro de Convenções Anhembi*. In an interview given in 2008, Ursula Schneider, one of the founders and first president of APIC, relates how people involved in the construction informed her that numerous events requiring interpreting services would be held at the convention centre, once completed, and that there were plans in collaboration with the cultural and educational institution FAAP (*Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado*) to train 20 interpreters per year to meet this demand. Schneider, a member of AIIC, decided not to accept the offer she received to be involved in the training initiative, in part because she and her colleagues did not believe there would be sufficient work for so many interpreters, in part because they did not identify themselves as

interpreter trainers and, according to Schneider's testimony, lacked the foundation for training other interpreters.

It turned out that the convention centre *Anhembi* offered much less work for interpreters than was originally projected. The training of interpreters at FAAP also never took concrete form. However, FAAP intended to offer interpreter training by teaching languages to people during their interpreter training, instead of evaluating the language proficiency of prospective students in a competitive selection process. Schneider attempted to explain to the FAAP that they had to train individuals that already knew languages and that what was being done had nothing to do with what they had learned in Geneva. These events inspired Ursula Schneider, along with another pioneer of the profession in Brazil, Ingrid Orglmeister, to create a professional association. In Schneider's words:

So I had the idea to create a professional association. I said: it is true, our field is not very professional. We need some sort of class organization to speak with more authority to these people and explain why we do not want to train interpreters, what has to be considered, how many new people the market can really handle every year, what type of training should be provided. [...] And that is how APIC emerged. (Schneider 2008, as cited in Pagura 2018:84 *et seq.*)⁴⁰

As stated at the outset of this chapter, the events around the creation of APIC correspond with Tseng's (1992) model. A prospective training institution, FAAP, was in the process of launching a training programme intended to release up to 20 new interpreters onto the market every year. On the one hand, it is reasonable to expect protective measures from established professionals. What interest would they have in training new practitioners who would subsequently push onto an already tight market? The theory of control discussed above is based on the assumption that in the process of professionalization, what is sought as an objective is market control. Training significant numbers of new practitioners would over the medium term surely reduce market control of those individuals already established on the market, particularly when no significant increase in the demand for the service is to be expected.

⁴⁰ “Então eu tive a ideia de fazer aqui uma associação profissional e disse: de fato, não temos uma área muito profissional. Temos que ter algum tipo de organização de classe, para falar com mais autoridade com essas pessoas e explicar por que nós não queremos formar intérpretes, quais são as considerações, o quanto o mercado aguenta, a rigor, de novas pessoas, todos os anos, e que tipo de formação é preciso dar. [...] E foi assim que surgiu a APIC.”

Parallel to this rationale, a second line of thought transpires from Schneiders testimony, that is again very much reflected in Tseng's professionalization model: a possible concern with regard to the competence of the graduates that would emerge from FAAP. According to the model, in *Phase I (Market Disorder)* clients often find it difficult to distinguish between a high-quality professional service and a lower quality service offered by laypeople. In *Market Disorder*, price rather than quality tends to determine market decisions. Now, when the group of established professionals around AIIC member Ursula Schneider, operating under conditions of *Market Disorder*, was faced with the prospect of numerous new interpreters of dubious capacity flooding an already tight market, the step to establish an association seems now, in retrospect and in the light of the model of professionalization, a reasonable consequence.

6.3.1.2 Ethical code and regulations of APIC

According to Tseng's model which incorporates elements of the theory of control, the association's key instrument for the exertion of internal and external control is the code of ethics.

The professional association [...] formulates a code of ethics, as indicated in (8) in the model, to ban the practices of advertising and price-cutting, reduce the competition among members and consolidate the profession. The enforcement of the code of ethics is crucial because it functions externally as one of the bargaining chips to earn public trust and internally as an indispensable tool for internal control. (Tseng 1992:49)

The ethical code of APIC (2018b) very much reflects the content of the AIIC code of professional ethics and is in line with what Tseng's model predicts. In essence, its nine articles contain the following: an obligation to confidentiality, to not use any information received in the course of interpreting assignments for personal benefit, to only accept assignments for which one is sufficiently qualified, to abstain from any activity that might harm the dignity of the profession, to professional behaviour including an abstention from any personal advertisement, to offer moral support and solidarity to one's colleagues and to respect the working conditions established in the association's regulations.

APIC's regulations (APIC 2018d) are far more comprehensive and detailed and consist of 50 articles divided into 15 chapters. They lay out detailed minimum standards for working

conditions that reflect international professional standards stipulated by AIIC (2018d).⁴¹ Until 1986, APIC stipulated specific fees for interpreting services; since then the corresponding article simply states that the fees charged by interpreters should be “consistent with the preservation of professional dignity and the working conditions established within the national and international frameworks” (APIC 2018d).⁴²

The extent to which the ethical code is enforced by the association is difficult to ascertain. There are indications that associated members adhere to the content of the ethical code and work according to the conditions laid down in the regulations, although many members are likely not to know the ethical code in detail (I-4). There is no test or exam on the code of ethics, different from the ATA (American Translators Association), where, in order to become a member, it must be proved that one has listened to an online presentation on professional ethics. *“What we know about our professional ethics is more a result of word of mouth than us sitting down and studying the ethical code”* (I-4). Irrespective of the extent to which the ethical code and the regulation of APIC are respected by the majority of non-affiliated professional interpreters, these standards represent benchmarks for the market and any professional, associated member or not, can refer to them and demand their observation when negotiating with a client. They are available online on the APIC website for any client to consult in the case of doubts as to the best practices and established working conditions of the profession.

Another important aspect of how the work of APIC has contributed to the professionalization of conference interpreting work in Brazil was the elaboration of a model contract⁴³ to be used by interpreters when agreeing with a client on the conditions of an assignment. This document comprises the essentials of the association’s regulation - with a particular focus on working conditions - and puts them into contractual form to be signed by both parties in advance of an assignment.

⁴¹ E.g. the non-divisibility of working days into hours, that interpreters are not to work alone for any extended period of time, that the use of booths is only renounced in cases where conditions do not permit their use, that the systematic use of *relay* is to be avoided, etc.

⁴² “*condizentes com a preservação da dignidade profissional e das condições de trabalho consagradas pelos marcos nacional e internacional.*”

⁴³ The APIC standard contract can be consulted at Pagura (2010:95-96).

6.3.1.3 APIC opening up

Over the past years, APIC has been going through a process of renewal characterized mainly by an opening up to new members. This renewal process of an association that has existed for decades and has “*a very good legacy*” (I-9) has been described as “*necessary*” (I-9, I-5).

Before this opening-up process began, APIC had a reputation of being very difficult to enter (I-12) and of being elitist (I-2, I-8).

When I started out in the interpreting profession, AIIC and APIC were almost like closed clubs. Indeed. They transmitted this image that there existed their club and then all the others. Nowadays it is different, this image no longer exists. They started opening up and allowing more professionals to enter the associations, because otherwise they might run the risk of losing relevance [since] many of the older members were retiring. (I-4)

There is also a geographic dimension to the association’s former stance. In former times, APIC had almost “*insurmountable barriers to entry*” (I-11) for interpreters with a professional domicile in places other than São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília. (I-11)⁴⁴ To counteract this geographic discrimination, “*around the year 2008 or 2009*” access to APIC was facilitated. Two double-blind accreditation tests were held, which allowed interpreters, that due to their geographic location could not fulfill the regular entry requirements to join the association (I-11).

Irrespective of the professional domicile, for many years one of the conditions for becoming a member was to have a minimum of three working languages. This excluded many interpreters from the possibility of joining (I-10). As stated above, the majority of conference interpreting assignments in Brazil demand only the combination Portuguese – English.

⁴⁴ The logic being this geographic exclusion being that if the professional domicile lies outside the main cities, according to the requirements laid out in the association’s regulations, travel and accommodation costs as well as per diems have to be charged to the client, making the fulfillment of another requirement practically impossible: accumulating the necessary number of working days sharing a booth with established association members.

According to Tseng (1992:49 *et seq.*), one “way to reduce competition and justify status and remuneration is to control admission to the association, as indicated in (9) in the model, [...representing] an indirect form of market control.” Indications suggest that for a long time this control was indeed exclusive. “*The organization was no longer representative. There were much more non-member interpreters than interpreters members of APIC*” (I-10).

Today, APIC has a posture of welcoming new interpreters that are already working with quality. This opening-up process was also precipitated by a change in management, a change in mentality. Younger members were admitted to the board (I-3).

Before, the market was much larger and it allowed for APIC to be a small group attending the “*filet mignon of the market*” (I-3) and the others served the rest. Suddenly there was less work. Since it is important for the market conditions to be respected and for the achievements of the association to be maintained, it made sense to facilitate the inclusion of young interpreters that were already doing good work.

APIC and AIIC are institutions associated with professional excellence, so by their very nature they must be restrictive in terms of numbers and selective regarding accession. They must be restrictive in order to maintain a certain level of quality. So there is the question of how representative they were of the class of interpreters as a whole. “*The profile is legitimate, but its outreach will be limited*” (I-15). There is no easy answer to how open a professional association should be. If it maintains very strict accession criteria, it will ensure a certain minimum standard with regard to quality, while at the same time restricting the number of members. This limits the overall representativeness of the association and leads to excluded interpreters to enter and thereby strengthen other segments of the market (I-10). In any case, matters relating to the association will be regarded differently depending on whether the vantage point lies within or outside the association’s boundaries.

Delving into the technical specificities of the opening up process would exceed the scope of this inquiry. Suffice it to say that as part of this process of opening up, the number of required working languages was reduced to two. It could not be ascertained whether the membership category of ‘Candidate Member’⁴⁵ was introduced as an element of facilitating accession, or

⁴⁵ “*Candidato a Membro*” see APIC (2018e).

whether it existed before. In any case, this membership category makes accession more realistic for young, budding interpreters, as it requires, among other things, only 50 working days (ten of which with established members) compared with the 200 days required for full membership. Another expression of this “opening up” is interesting to observe: As of 2018 and for the first time in the association’s history, mechanisms are being introduced to incorporate sign language interpreters into APIC (I-14).

6.3.2 AIIC Brazil

The chapter on the history of APIC has already laid out how central AIIC⁴⁶ had been for the creation of the national professional association. In essence it served as the blueprint for APIC and was thus instrumental in the successive introduction of the modern profession of conference interpreting to Brazil, along with the best practices and working conditions established by AIIC interpreters. Until today, AIIC serves as a model for international best practices (I-12).

AIIC Brazil maintains a website (AIIC 2018e) with general information about the profession and association in Portuguese. It includes technical standards on fixed and mobile booths, information on membership and a link to the directory on aiic.net to locate AIIC interpreters in Brazil.

AIIC Brazil is a chapter of the international association and does not have recognized legal status at the national level. It is thus a national branch of the international association (I-15, I-16). According to the AIIC website (AIIC 2018f), at the time of writing there are 63 registered AIIC interpreters in Brazil, more than half of which have their professional domicile in Rio, reconfirming what has been mentioned above and underlining the impression of a number of interpreters interviewed, that AIIC is more associated with Rio while APIC has a stronger presence in São Paulo (e.g. I-12).

AIIC Brazil is also significant to the profession in that it organizes, often in collaboration with APIC, short professional training courses that are open to all interpreters, not just to association members (Vianna 2015:4). These courses can be specific to interpreting, but some

⁴⁶ For more information on AIIC and its importance to the profession internationally, refer to Thiéry (2015).

also deal with other topics relevant to the profession. One respondent recounts a marketing course, intended to help interpreters position their services more effectively on the market, for which a person from AIIC came to Brazil and offered the two-day course to local interpreters. *“Generally, a trainer comes from abroad, from Europe or North America, and a course of a few days is organized. These courses generally take place in Rio or São Paulo. There have been initiatives to offer such courses in Brasilia also”* (I-2). For example, in 2016 Helen Campbell held an AIIC-organized workshop on note-taking for consecutive interpreting in Brasilia. *“Interpreters came up to Brasilia from Rio and São Paulo, because the workshops in their cities were already fully booked. There was a lot of demand [...however] people [in Brasilia] don’t have much interest in participating in these courses”* (I-5). The demand for such courses has been described as *“a very interesting thermometer to indicate the level of professionalization”* (I-5).

AIIC is also highly relevant for conference interpreter training in Brazil in the sense that it brings Training of Trainers workshops to a region that otherwise offers no specific courses on training interpreters (I-15).

Vianna (2015:14 *et seq.*) provides a list of courses offered by *AIIC Training* in South America over the time period 2012-15. Four Training of Trainers workshops were held in this period, one of which, called *Skill acquisition in interpreting: the theory and practice of feedback* was held by Barbara Moser-Mercer in Rio de Janeiro in July 2012 (the others were held in Santiago, Buenos Aires and Lima). A total of eight professional development courses were held on the continent over the same period, three in Rio and one in Curitiba, covering topics such as *Note-taking for consecutive interpreting* and *English retour*.

In 2018, the Private Market Sector (PRIMS) of AIIC held a BarCamp (AIIC 2018g) event at PUC-Rio de Janeiro. This group meets every year somewhere in the world and convenes a type of conference to discuss questions of interest to the sector. *“This year it was in Rio. Many colleagues came, but surprisingly many also did not come”* (I-3).

Similar to APIC, AIIC has also facilitated the accession of new members over the past years (I-5), reducing the minimum number of working languages from three to two (I-10). The scope of this paper does not allow for a discussion on how AIIC admissions criteria changed over time. In summary, the main relevance of AIIC in Brazil lies in its role as a model

association, in the prestige it confers to its members and in the professional training as well as Training of Trainers courses it offers.

6.3.3 SINTRA

SINTRA (*Sindicato Nacional do Tradutores*)⁴⁷ is the national union of translators and interpreters in Brazil and thus at first glance, strictly speaking, not a professional association. It was founded in 1988 in Rio de Janeiro, after a group of translators managed to achieve the official recognition of the translator profession on the part of the state. The trade union represents translators and interpreters around the country.⁴⁸ Similar to ABRATES, there is no selection process for affiliation at SINTRA, so by default the union could potentially have a very wide reach. Currently SINTRA has between 300 and 400 members around the country, which has been described as “*very, very little*” (I-13). There is no statistical data on how many translators and interpreters exist around the country. “*Thousands.*”

SINTRA maintains partnerships with other organizations such as training institutions. One example is an agreement with the CCE (*Centro de Especialização e Extensão*) of PUC-Rio, the office administering courses in conference interpreting at that university. Within the realm of this cooperation agreement, SINTRA members receive a discount of 10% at the CCE. A similar kind of agreement exists between SINTRA and the University Estácio de Sá,⁴⁹ where discounts of 20% are granted. SINTRA members also receive a discounted price for the EPIC courses mentioned in the chapter on Training institutions.

These partnerships are a good examples of important institutional links in the process of increasing professionalization, links between a professional association and a training institution, depicted as Arrow 7 in Figure 1. Tseng argues that “the training institutions sanctioned or recognized by the professional association contribute to reinforcing the consensus and commitment of the practitioners, more notably in terms of the commitment” (1992:49). Consensus and commitment as significant dimensions of professionalization are discussed in a separate chapter of this paper, however the fact that these partnerships exist are

⁴⁷ The following is based on information available online in Portuguese at SINTRA (2018a).

⁴⁸ This distinguishes it from most unions in Brazil, whose geographic scope tends to be limited to individual federal states (I-13).

⁴⁹ At the time of writing, Estácio de Sá is no longer offering courses in conference interpreting.

a definite indicator that the training institutions mentioned above are sanctioned and recognized by SINTRA. There are plans for the creation of more institutional partnerships in the future (I-13).

The SINTRA website offers an online search function to find affiliated professionals according to language pairs and location (SINTRA 2018b). In 2018, a new landing page went online and the website is currently undergoing a general overhaul. For many years the website had not been very actively maintained. As part of its public relations work, SINTRA is also active in social media (I-13).

SINTRA has an in-house lawyer that represents the union in case of any possible legal proceedings and every affiliated professional has the right to one hour of legal advice per year as a service included in the membership (I-13).

Some of the activities of the trade union are more relevant to translators than to interpreters. One of SINTRA's main lines of work, for example, is to campaign for the intellectual property rights of translators of books. When there are troubles with clients, mostly in cases when payments are delayed or not forthcoming, SINTRA offers support to translators, attempting to assert their rights. Part of SINTRA's work is also to lobby for a reduction of tax on conference interpreting and translation services. The union's core business consists in *"going to the federal and state governments and lobbying to make fiscal solutions better [...] solutions that will benefit every translator and interpreter"* (I-13).

From 2003 to 2016, the Brazilian government was controlled by the Workers' Party⁵⁰ PT, dominated by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and supported by a platform in which trade unions played an important role. Lula himself, as a political figure, emerged from a large steelworkers' union in the state of São Paulo.⁵¹ According to one perspective, in this political context an association such as APIC was *"not at all interesting, but a trade union is indeed interesting"* (I-14). Traditionally, unions have received a lot of support from the Brazilian government (I-13). This dimension will only be mentioned here in passing, since the scope to this enquiry impedes any deeper exploration of the dynamics between political cycles,

⁵⁰ *"Partido dos Trabalhadores."*

⁵¹ *"Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos do ABC."*

ideologies and the potential of professional associations or trade unions to promote the interests of a profession.

As mentioned above, conference interpreting is not regulated in Brazil and professionals are mostly freelancers. There is thus no obligation for them to join a trade union. Conference interpreters tend to form legal entities via which they offer their services. Therefore, formally speaking the professional relationship mostly occurs between two legal entities, the contracting company and the one offering the service. Needless to say, trade unions traditionally represent workers in the face of companies, so there is some reason to question the rationale behind a trade union of freelance translators and interpreters altogether.

Until a new law came into force on January 1st, 2018, obligatory union contributions were automatically deducted from salaries paid in Brazil. The few translators and interpreters that worked as employees could choose which union these contributions would benefit, one option being SINTRA. The majority of professionals, being freelancers, would have to take a specific decision to support the work of SINTRA by joining and paying the fees voluntarily. Until that date, SINTRA offered only a few specific benefits to its members at the level of the individual, such as discounts at bookstores. As of January 1st, 2018, SINTRA has begun offering more benefits to its members, including health insurance options. The same year, ABRATES also began offering health insurance to its members (I-13).

From the perspective of the individual professional, joining SINTRA makes sense if there is a belief in the importance of strengthening the profession, a sentiment of social responsibility, or to take advantage of the benefits offered. *“What will guarantee loyalty to SINTRA will be the advantages it offers”* (I-4). In order to attract more members, SINTRA would have to become *“a little bit more like an association”* (I-13).

It should also be taken into consideration that SINTRA members represent only a portion of professional translators and interpreters active on the market, so the degree to which the union represents these professions as a whole - similar to the other associations - can be up for debate (I-15).

As a union, SINTRA has the responsibility *“to educate clients and the general public”* (I-13). Among the initiatives planned for 2019, the union intends to create informative videos to

teach the general public, prospective clients and budding translators and interpreters about how the translation professions work. These videos shall be published on SINTRA's website and on social media.

6.3.3.1 Reference prices for the translation professions

The main relevance of SINTRA for the conference interpreting profession, at least from the perspective of a majority of interpreters interviewed, is that it publishes a list of reference prices (I-4, I-5, I-13. See also: SINTRA 2018c), which support the translator and interpreter professions to achieve and maintain decent fees. The reference prices are published annually and are based on consultations with well-paid professionals. They include recommended fees for a wide range of translation and interpreting services and are intended to serve as an orientation for clients and as a guideline for professionals to determine their fees in line with the best-paying segment of the market. The reference prices are of particular relevance as a benchmark when negotiating fees with new clients (I-10) and are thus important for the profession as a whole. The list of reference prices has been relevant both for affiliated members as well as for those not affiliated (I-12). There are regional adaptations to the reference prices, paying tribute to the variations in costs of living around the country. Similar to the ATA, SINTRA was sued for antitrust practices (I-16). However, different to the ATA, it won the case and retains its right to publish reference prices. Winning the law suit also increased the legitimacy of the reference prices (I-13).

6.3.4 ABRATES

APIC is an association of interpreters. ABRATES is an association of translators and interpreters. It is a different universe. (I-2)

In December 1999, the Brazilian Association of Translators, ABRATES, was founded in Rio de Janeiro by SINTRA members (SINTRA 2018a). Thus, the organization in a sense emerged from the trade union. ABRATES was founded as the *Associação Brasileira de Tradutores* (Brazilian Association of Translators) and was originally an association of literary translators (I-14). Subsequently, around 2007, the association changed its name by adding “*e Intérpretes*” (and Interpreters), neither altering the acronym nor the logo (I-4). Unlike APIC,

ABRATES has no specific requirements for membership, anybody who pays the fee can become a member. Over the years, ABRATES' interest in interpreting has been growing (I-15).

Just like the work that is put into APIC, AIIC and SINTRA, all the work for ABRATES is voluntary (I-1, I-4). The association offers a number of benefits to its members, such as discounts for *paypal*, an online payment method commonly used by translators and interpreters in Brazil (I-9). Members also gain access to health insurance plans via the association, which is highly relevant, because for freelancers in Brazil it is difficult to get health insurance at a reasonable price (I-4, I-8). Members also receive discounts on courses offered by partner institutions. Another advantage of joining ABRATES is status (I-2); like any other professional association, being a member provides backing in negotiations with clients and contributes to recognition among peers.

ABRATES, being mainly an association of translators, offers accreditation exams to translators. On one occasion, at a time when admission to APIC and AIIC was still more restrictive, ABRATES conducted accreditations for interpreters as well, however this initiative was subsequently discontinued (I-4).

Networking opportunities are also among the benefits members enjoy (I-4). Another major advantage of being an ABRATES member is a significant discount for the annual conference (I-8), which is arguably the most important event related to the profession in Brazil.

Over the past years ABRATES has become increasingly relevant to conference interpreters mainly due to its annual conference (I-5, I-11), which is important for the visibility and consolidation of the profession (I-15).

6.3.4.1 ABRATES Conference

The first ever ABRATES conference took place in a little hall of a hotel and counted around 150 participants.

Back then, the conference would take place every two or three years. Nowadays, it takes place every year. For the past 3 or 4 years, 800 or 900 translators and interpreters have been coming together at the annual conference. Speakers of the highest quality are invited [...] There are a number of relevant events in Brazil, but none achieves the scope of ABRATES [...] Before, ABRATES tended to promote events more in Rio de Janeiro, now it has become a name that is relevant in events in all of Brazil. It even represents Brazil in events abroad [...] The annual conferences have become increasingly significant [...] people come from around the country and also from abroad [...] interpreting has gained a lot of ground at the annual conferences, that used to be more focused on translation. (I-5)

In yet another manifestation of the increasing visibility of sign language interpreting in Brazil, this profession is also becoming increasingly present at the ABRATES conferences (I-5).

Nowadays, the conference includes one hall dedicated entirely to topics related to the interpreting profession and all the halls have booths for budding interpreters to practice in a conference setting and expose their work to the professional community. Young interpreters ask their senior peers to listen in and give feedback (I-2, I-11).

At the annual conference, ABRATES provides a platform to discuss issues related to professionalization. Translators and interpreters come together in round table discussions on commercial issues such as fees. *“ABRATES is important in that it brings new professionals together to discuss issues of professionalization: fees, market segments, opportunities for professional development”* (I-5).

Apart from offering excellent opportunities for networking and keeping up to date with the profession, the conference also forges a sense of cohesion. It provides a forum where professionals share their ideas on how to strengthen the profession (I-1). *“Many interpreters start working by coincidence without ever having received formal training, so they don’t know about the benchmarks for working conditions established by the associations. The ABRATES conference helps bringing people together to share this knowledge”* (I-1).

There have been initiatives to bring the ABRATES conference to Brasilia for example, however due to costs and logistics it is difficult to move away from the main axis Rio-São Paulo (I-5). Nevertheless, in 2010 the conference took place in Porto Alegre, in the South of the country. This was first time it was held in a place different from Rio or São Paulo. In 2013 it was held in Belo Horizonte, the capital of Minas Gerais. Since then it has again been held either in Rio or São Paulo.

ABRATES has in recent times had an excellent stance, it is very open, it is present in many events, it welcomes young graduates. If you have a professional association, it must be representative of the class. The strength is in the numbers, and I believe ABRATES realized this quite early on [...] ABRATES has done good work in this sense.
(I-12)

6.3.4.2 Public outreach of ABRATES

One example of public relations work by a professional association is an initiative of ABRATES at the Entrepreneur Fair of the Brazilian Micro and Small Enterprises' Support Service (SEBRAE)⁵² which took place at the Anhembi Convention Centre in São Paulo in April 2018. The association offered free of charge simultaneous interpreting for the event. The individual interpreters contracted by ABRATES received their fees, but the association offered the service to the trade fair for free, to promote the association and the profession as a whole. ABRATES also had the opportunity to present on the profession at one of the panels, explaining the importance of having a website translated by professionals, for example, or contracting professional interpreters when inviting foreign speakers or conference participants (I-8). This is a good example of PR work aimed at increasing the visibility of the profession, as depicted in Tseng's model as Arrows 12 and 14 (see Figure 1). This initiative was the first of its kind. Within APIC such initiatives have also been discussed but have so far not been put into practice (I-8).

ABRATES also has a website in three languages (Portuguese, English and Spanish) that includes a directory of professionals with a search function (see ABRATES 2018) and information on the association as well as on the annual conference.

⁵² "Feira do Empreendedor da SEBRAE (Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas)."

6.3.5 Associations of sworn translators

The chapter Protection and Licensure discusses the phenomenon of sworn translators and their relevance to the conference interpreting profession in Brazil. The present chapter briefly introduces the professional associations of sworn translators. The focus of this paper lies on the profession of conference interpreting and, as expounded below, sworn translators - who sometimes also interpret - are not of particular relevance to the profession as a whole. Therefore, the discussion on the professional niche of sworn translators will not go into any analytical depth but merely provide an introductory overview.

Administratively, sworn translators fall under the *Junta Comercial*⁵³ of each individual federal state. Accordingly, each state (or most states⁵⁴) has its own association of sworn translators. For example, ATPIESP (*Associação Profissional dos Tradutores Públicos e Intérpretes Comerciais do Estado de São Paulo*) is the association of São Paulo (ATPIESP 2018), ATP-RIO (*Associação dos Tradutores Públicos do Rio de Janeiro*) is the association of Rio (ATP-RIO 2018), ASTRAJURS that of Rio Grande do Sul (ASTRAJURS 2018), ACETESP that of Ceará (ACETESP 2018), etc.

The associations bundle the interests of the individual sworn translators of each state, irrespective of their language combination. They publish the official price lists on their websites, prices for interpreting and translation services that have to be adhered to for the corresponding services. Generally, the websites include directories of translators with search functions according to language combinations. The associations of sworn translators assume the responsibility of informing new members on important aspects of the profession, which is significant against a backdrop where at times not much is forthcoming from the relevant authority, the *Junta Comercial*, or when it takes far too long for the authority to provide the needed information. This was particularly relevant, for instance, when the requirement of the Apostille was introduced (I-16). Another element of the associations' work is political lobbying to protect the interest of the profession. At the time of writing, the association of sworn translators are “*lobbying heavily at the congress in Brasilia [...] against the passing of*

⁵³ “Trade Registry.”

⁵⁴ This information could not be verified.

a law [...that would] eradicate the requirement of certifying translators” (I-16), which would effectively deregulate the profession and lift the legal protection it. The chapter on Protection and licensure discusses the relevance of sworn translators to the profession in more detail.

6.3.6 Summary of professional associations

There is SINTRA, there is ABRATES, there is APIC, there is AIIC, it is very much diluted, force is lost. I believe if there was one single association [...] of interpreters assembling a larger number, [this could benefit the profession]. (I-10)

Similar to the way the professional associations bundle and crystalize forces within the profession, they are also marked by the dynamism of the sector as a whole. Every few years, the executive boards are formed by new committees of volunteer professionals and the activities of the associations unfold within a dichotomy of continuity and innovation.

This chapter has attempted to provide an overview of the associations most relevant to the conference interpreting profession in Brazil however, to do justice to the complexity of the field more specific and thorough research would be required. Nevertheless, a number of interesting dimensions have transpired. On the one hand, the quote at the outset of this chapter raises the issue that due to the existence of various relevant associations, the strength of the individual association is diluted. Every membership implies costs, a factor which disincentivises interpreters from joining all the associations. The dilution is further exacerbated by a competition among associations offering similar kinds of benefits. These factors appear to weaken the associations. At the same time, forces of cohesion and collaboration can be observed. Institutional partnerships are being forged, not only among associations but also with training institutions.

These partnerships are one of the dimensions in which the case of Brazil corroborates Tseng’s professionalization model (see Arrow 7 in Figure 1). Other dimensions are APIC’s code of ethics (Arrow 8) and admission procedures (Arrow 9) as ways by which a professional association can exert internal and external control. The fact that APIC and AIIC opened up by making accession easier can be interpreted as a reaction to a loss of external control, i.e. that association members were losing grounds on the market and that the association was losing overall relevance to the profession. Another hypothesis that could be

developed on the basis of indicators emerging from the research findings is that ABRATES opened up to interpreters and became more relevant to the profession, filling a void created by a more exclusive and closed-off stance on the part of APIC. Many younger interpreters entering the profession were barred from joining the main professional association and therefore bundled their forces in another association that was indeed open to them: that of translators. However, these preliminary and rather superficial hypotheses would have to be investigated by further research.

With regard to publicity work (Arrow 12), some indications of such activity could be identified among the associations, however to a rather limited extent. According to Tseng's model, the associations seek to engage in political persuasion with the intention to cause the transition from *Phase III* to *Phase IV (Professional Autonomy)*. These tendencies are object of the following chapter.

6.4 Protection and licensure

According to the model proposed by Tseng (1992), the ultimate stage of professionalization, *Professional Autonomy*, is characterized by legal protection of the profession and by a licensure for professionals. By and large, this has not been achieved for the translation and interpreting professions in Brazil. However, there is one notable, albeit marginal exception: sworn translators.

6.4.1 Sworn translators

The official title of the profession of sworn translators in Brazil is “*Tradutor Público e Intérprete Comercial*,”⁵⁵ but these professionals are commonly referred to as “*tradutores juramentados*”⁵⁶ (I-3). By law, sworn translators must be Brazilian citizens, even if they interpret or translate into English (I-14).

⁵⁵ Literally: ‘Public Translator and Trade Interpreter.’

⁵⁶ ‘Sworn translators’ or ‘certified translators.’

Elements of the profession are both regulated and protected. Professionals have to pass a state examination for their language pair in order to become accredited. They then receive their registration number along with the right to issue certified translations. They are certified both for written and for oral translations (I-13). In Brazil court interpreting is generally done by sworn translators, however non-certified interpreters authorized by a judge can also be appointed *ad hoc* to interpret when necessary (Araujo 2017:12, I-4). Apart from interpreting at court, sworn translators are also requested by authorities to accompany foreigners to registry offices and other government offices (APIC 2018f).

Many of the sworn translators are not trained interpreters (I-3). When it comes to court interpreting assignments, some don't accept the assignments, other accept them and learn by doing. Some others are indeed also trained interpreters.

The responsible public authority for sworn translators is the *Junta Comercial*⁵⁷ of each individual federal state. It is also the registrar that decides when state examinations are held to accredit new translators. The exam consists in a written part and an interview, interpreting skills are not tested (I-16). The last state examination in São Paulo, for example, was held 18 years ago (I-7). In Rio, the last exam took place in 2009, after a period of over 30 years without an examination (I-16). Many possible candidates are thus excluded from this regulated niche of the profession. Apparently, access is regulated only in part by merit and to a significant degree by timing. Since the accreditation has validity at the national level (I-7), some translators and interpreters take advantage of a loophole by which they can take the exam in another federal state and then manage to get transferred (I-12).

There are a number of regulations that sworn translators are subjected to, for example they are obliged to keep copies of all translations and hand them in periodically. There is a table of fixed prices for translation and interpreting services that must be respected and these prices are often not adjusted for many years (I-12). The rates have been described as comparatively low and thus not very attractive to conference interpreters, affirming that the title *Tradutor público e intérprete comercial* has hardly any relevance for professional conference interpreters (I-4, I-6, I-16). Sometimes payments from state courts are also significantly delayed (I-7, I-16). However, it has been pointed out that the title of sworn translator does

⁵⁷ 'Commercial registrar.'

contribute to raise the profile of the individual interpreter since it entails certain prestige (I-12). Because the state examination is demanding, many of those interpreters that do become sworn translators tend to have a high level of proficiency and are often also members of the professional associations.

According to one perspective, one thing the professional association could do is to lobby for a higher frequency and a regularity of the state examinations, for example to offer one exam per language pair say, every five years. To avoid accrediting too many professionals, the difficulty of the exam could simply be raised, thereby potentially raising the profile of accredited translators and interpreters in the long run (I-12).

Referring back to Tseng's professionalization model, one might assume that it would be in the interest of the profession at large to achieve regulation and protection for the entire profession and indeed there have been attempts on the part of the professional associations. In the late 1990s, for example, significant efforts were made on the part of APIC (I-14). Similar to the way sworn translators exercise their profession under the protective umbrella of state regulation, this initiative intended to create a legal framework requiring a state examination for the exercise of the profession of conference interpreter. *"We spent days in Brasilia and in Rio [...] we did not manage to find our way in among the politicians [...] there was no interest at all [...] we tried and tried and tried. And they said the profession was too insignificant in terms of numbers [...] but there are just as few sworn translators"* (I-14).

In the 1980s a lot of effort had also been put into attempting to regulate the translation and interpreting professions (I-6). A process that should lead to a corresponding draft bill had been initiated at the Ministry of Education and at a certain point the file containing all the pertinent documents was found to have a number of pages missing and the process was stalled. "We were very, very close to the regulation" (I-6). Over 30 years ago, McCleary (1986:193 *et.seq.*) writes:

[T]he established prestige of [APIC...] exerts a strong formative influence on the profession. [...] Still, the fact that in most places, except for court interpreters, there is no official recognition of the profession puts hardship on those who practice it, and conference interpreters have joined translators in pressuring for professional recognition.

While these initiatives have indeed been launched by professional interpreters wanting to achieve regulation, a number of other interpreters interviewed view the possibility of government regulation of the interpreting profession through a more sceptical lens (I-1, I-4, I-13). According to this perspective, if the government were to regulate the profession, the fees could fall well below current rates. The fees for sign language interpreting are regulated, for example, and they are significantly lower than those for spoken languages (I-1).

Many people speak about regulating the translation professions [...] this is very far away. The first step [...] would be either to include the professions in the list of MEI⁵⁸ [which would be “a great step forward”] or to reduce [...] the tax category of the profession. And since the category was reduced a number of years ago, it is unlikely that it will be reduced again. (I-13)

Other interpreters are proponents of regulating the profession. While “*associations can only make recommendations,*” ideal working conditions could only be enforced if the profession were to be regulated (I-6).

Clearly, there are more dimensions to this issue than what can be treated within the present scope. It is surely not inconceivable for the profession to be subject to a state accreditation test without having to fix fees. It must be considered that opinions will be divided on this issue since the group of interpreters in Brazil is by no means homogenous and regulation would likely benefit some more than others. Solid foundations for this discussion would require a more targeted investigation of the issue.

While there is no accreditation for the conference interpreting profession on the part of the Brazilian state - with the minor exception of the sworn translator discussed above - to some extent the professional associations have filled this void. It has been pointed out that, similar to the way a certification of the ATA or of ABRATES vouches for a certain level of professionalism and quality in written translation, in the world of conference interpreting an affiliation to APIC or AIIC guarantees certain minimal standards. And, to a large degree in

⁵⁸ MEI (*Micro Empresa Individual* or “Individual micro-businesses”) is a type of business that pays a fixed corporate service tax (ISS, *Imposto Sobre Serviços*) where the filing of taxes is relatively straightforward. It could be relevant for interpreters with a gross revenue below a certain threshold. Currently, interpreters and translators cannot register MEIs for their services (I-13).

São Paulo having graduated from Associação Alumni as well (I-6). This corresponds to Tseng's (1992:50) view, that

[f]or occupations that have not persuaded the government to grant accreditation for the members, the leverage they can use to control the number of practitioners is very limited. Nevertheless, the occupational group can control admission to the association as an indirect form of market control.

6.5 Public recognition of the profession

According to Tseng (1992), the visibility of the profession among the wider public as well as among clients and legal authorities constitutes an important element of the professionalization process, particularly for the emancipation from *Phase III* to *Phase IV*.

Public recognition of the profession influences the clientele in recruiting professionals and the clientele, having realized the benefits of recruiting true professionals, can provide feedback to the public to enhance public recognition of the profession. Recognition by the clientele and the public contributes to reinforce the power of the professional association [as indicated in Arrows 10 and 13 in Figure 1] (Tseng 1992:51).

Due to the nature of the subject it would be daring to make any conclusive remarks with regard to the visibility and recognition of the interpreting profession as a whole; the field is vast and the public even vaster. However, this study does allow to make a few humble observations in this respect.

First of all, in Brazil the term 'interpreter'⁵⁹ is widely associated with theatre or movie acting (I-15). This alone is indicative of the overall level of awareness of the profession. It is common for interpreters to be referred to as '(simultaneous) translators',⁶⁰ so the terminology does not exactly contribute to elucidate conference interpreting as a profession in its own right.

Among the interpreters interviewed there prevails a general sense that the profession is very much invisible and that little is known about the interpreter's work among the wider public (I-1, I-2). Some respondents feel that the profession has been gaining visibility over the past

⁵⁹ "Intérprete."

⁶⁰ "Tradutor simultâneo."

years, both among clients and the wider public (I-6) and that the World Cup of 2014 and the Olympic Games of 2016 particularly contributed to a greater visibility of the profession and to more awareness among the public due to the presence of the profession in the media (I-4).

An increasing awareness among clients could be the result of years of client education by individual interpreters (I-6). Due to the close association of these related professions, when translators receive more visibility, so do conference interpreters. A recent success for the translation profession in terms of recognition and visibility was to achieve a provision stipulating that the name of the translator must be printed in translated books (I-15).

Irrespective of the degree to which these perceived tendencies of visibility and recognition hold true for the profession, the fact remains that, by and large, it remains invisible. *“We are confronted with a lack of knowledge on the part of society regarding the necessary conditions for us to do our work [...] If you asked a lawyer or engineer, in general [...] they really have no idea about the nature of our work”* (I-5). It has been argued that it lies within the responsibility of the professional associations to raise awareness among the public about the translation professions (I-1).

According to one respondent, there is an overall perception that the interpreting quality is mediocre and that there is a tendency for generalization in the sense that people who have heard bad interpreting jump to the conclusion that interpreting is bad overall (I-9).

Another respondent observes that with the surge of the internet there might arise a tendency for translation to be perceived again as an automatic service to be taken for granted. The fact that websites can be translated automatically into any of a vast number of languages at the click of a mouse does not exactly contribute to greater public awareness about the work behind professional translation services. As time progresses, automatic translations are improving. One might speculate that mobile phone apps offering interpreting services, for example, could have a similarly detrimental effect on public awareness and recognition of the interpreter’s profession (I-6).

In 2018, the city council of São Bernardo do Campo in greater São Paulo celebrated the International Translation Day with a solemn ceremony. This was the first time ever for this to occur in Brazil (I-13). The city council had passed a law that, as of 2018, the International

Translation Day would be celebrated with a solemn ceremony every year. There was some delay in 2018; instead of the celebration taking place on or around September 30th, the feast of St. Jerome, the patron saint of translators, it was held on November 27th. It is no coincidence for the city of São Bernardo do Campo to honor the translation profession: Its founder, João Ramalho, an early Portuguese adventurer and explorer, also served as *língua* (interpreter) for Pedro Álvares Cabral, the man credited as being the European ‘discoverer’ of Brazil. João Ramalho is thus recognized to have been the first *língua* of Brazil (I-13). Earlier in 2018, a translator from São Bernardo, Damiana Rosa de Oliveira, co-authored a book⁶¹ on the history of translation in Brazil and the media attention it received contributed to the city council’s decision to begin officially honoring the translation profession every year (I-13). Representatives of the different professional associations were present at the ceremony. Apart from increasing the recognition of the profession, a possible media echo of these ceremonies in the future could also further raise public awareness of the profession to some degree.

6.6 Control over working conditions

As discussed in the chapter Theoretical foundations, an important dimension of the external control a professional association is able to exert lies in its control over the working conditions. Tseng (1992:48) calls this the exertion of “influence over [the] job description.” The term *working conditions* can entail a plethora of elements (see for example AIIC 2018d), ranging from fees charged along with *per diems* and the covering of travel expenses and accommodation, to the size of a portable simultaneous booth, to the number of working hours. Conceptually, working conditions can also include such aspects as the technical difficulty of a presentation or even a speaker’s accent. Atkinson’s (2006:62) research on the interpreting market in Rio comes to the conclusion, that

The restrictions perceived by interpreters derive from a variety of sources: the sound company and the sound technician employed; the speaker; the interpreter colleague; the coordinating interpreter; and the client and/or organizer of the event. In other words, all the other participants of the event.⁶²

⁶¹ *A Fantástica História (Ainda não Contada) da Tradução no Brasil.*

⁶² “As restrições percebidas pelos intérpretes têm fontes múltiplas: a empresa de sonorização e o técnico empregado por ela; o orador, o intérprete colega; o intérprete coordenador; e o cliente e/ou organizador do evento. Ou seja, todos os outros participantes do evento.”

To a certain degree, all of these elements lie outside of the control of the interpreter. Other aspects, however, can potentially be controlled, depending to some extent on the capacity of the individual professionals and the profession as a whole to do so.

One such aspect which, if not entirely controlled, can at least be influenced, is the obtention of information and documents for preparation. It is common knowledge among interpreters that an essential aspect of decent working conditions consists in receiving relevant information and documents in advance, allowing for sufficient time for preparation. According to the experience of the majority of professionals interviewed, their ability to receive the necessary documents varies a lot and it is difficult to generalize (I-1, I-3, I-4, I-6). Generally, the more professional an event is, the more likely it is for interpreters to receive the necessary material (I-9).

While receiving documents and information in advance has always been important for the work of a professional interpreter, in some cases today it has become less important because the internet has facilitated preparation enormously (I-3).

Even if the internet has made the need for receiving documents less pressing, depending on the event it can still be highly relevant and judging from the research, this is an area where the profession can be said to have only a partial capacity to exercise external control. Another such area are the actual physical conditions under which interpreters work. Both AIIC and APIC regulations stipulate that, whenever possible, booths for simultaneous interpreting shall be available and that the interpreter would only have to resort to portable audio equipment only if booths are not viable (see the chapter Ethical code and regulations of APIC). The research does not permit a generalization on this point, but there are indications that this aspect of the working conditions is at times also beyond the interpreter's control. A case in point for this phenomenon is the following declaration:

Another tendency is the use of portable equipment in situations where that is not recommended, where a fixed booth would be the ideal solution, but companies opt for this because it is cheaper. So sometimes you work for an entire day standing, without a booth, with a lavalier microphone in your hand, trying to run after the people in a meeting in order to hear [...These are] conditions far removed from the ideal. (I-11)

While working conditions in general have improved over the years, *“there is still a lot to improve. It is not easy”* (I-6).

Nevertheless, some aspects of the working conditions can be and to some extent are being controlled by the profession, in a deliberate effort to - in the words of the professionalization model - exercise external control. Any simultaneous interpreter knows that the sound quality in the booth constitutes a decisive element of the working conditions and can have a direct impact on the overall performance of the professional. In an attempt to control this aspect of the interpreter's work, around 2010 APIC launched a campaign to honor the best sound engineer and best sound company at the end of every year. After the completion of an assignment, conference interpreters are asked to evaluate the work of the sound technician present as well as the overall performance of the company responsible for providing simultaneous interpreting equipment and sound. The online surveying tool *Survey Monkey* is used for this purpose (I-2). Prize money, donated by APIC members, is then presented to the most voted technician. This initiative is also intended to increase the self-esteem of the sound technicians, who *“often are people of very humble backgrounds”* (I-14). *“It is a good initiative to value the work of the technicians, because their work is also widely invisible. Often technicians, just like interpreters, are treated like a piece of equipment”* (I-12).

This initiative is generally known among the interpreters interviewed. Regionally, it seems to be restricted to the markets of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. It is not present in Brasília (I-5). Many of the respondents find the initiative excellent (I-9, I-11, I-12). *“We can only do a good job, if the technician also does a good job”* (I-9). Apparently, it *“made a huge difference in the market, since [...] this campaign [was implemented]”* (I-2).

While the campaign has been successful in improving the working conditions of conference interpreters in the booth with regard to the sound quality, working conditions obviously entail a lot more, for example, whether the client is prepared to pay for a booth in the first place (I-14).

Certain dynamics might possibly limit the impact of this campaign in certain cases, for example the way events are sometimes set up. At times there is a main sound technician responsible for the audio output in the hall and then a separate technician for the

simultaneous equipment who depends on the output received from his colleague. This can create a situation where the sound quality arriving at the booth may not be up to the mark without any fault on the part of the company or technician responsible for the simultaneous equipment (I-11). However, on the whole practically every interpreter interviewed agreed that this is a successful and effective campaign.

Despite the fact that many facets of the working conditions faced by interpreters are beyond their control and despite the apparent difficulties encountered when it comes to enforcing other aspects such as receiving material for preparation on time or having booths available whenever possible, the campaign for the best sound technician shows a proactive stance of the professional association APIC to improve the working conditions of professionals. It is one example of how the profession is willing and able to exercise external control, within the limitations of what is possible.

6.7 Outlook

What is valued today is the best price, whatever is faster, what is more visible. Nowadays, what matters is that you are visible on the internet. (I-16)

There seems to be a general consensus among professional interpreters active for many years that in the past things were much better. *“We are no longer living in the golden era of interpreting. But on the other hand we may not permit things to become completely chaotic.” (I-5) “Nowadays the interpreter is something like a still somewhat important part of the equipment [...] back in the days when we began, the interpreter was a bridge and had to be good” (I-14).*

Among the respondents, there was not much optimism with regard to the future of the profession. For one, there is a worry with regard to the new technologies, that fewer interpreters will be needed (I-3). Remote interpreting is another significant issue for the future. Although it is still the exception in Brazil, many interpreters believe that it is a tendency that will be difficult to avoid (I-3, I-11). This tendency could also make agencies increasingly relevant in the future, because of their capacity to establish studios (I-1).

Another tendency for the future could be that sign language interpreting will become increasingly important and visible, which would also affect the visibility of the conference interpreting profession. Because the wife of Jair Bolsonaro⁶³ is a specialist in that field and very dedicated, it is likely that sign-language interpreting will receive a significant impulse in Brazil (I-6). *“Sign language interpreting is currently booming [...] we see [it] everywhere [...] many training courses are emerging because there is massive demand, it is something that will be growing in the future [...] It is a very promising market”* (I-7).

A number of points have been raised with regard to what the professional associations could do to strengthen the profession. Since technologies will affect the profession at an increasing rate, the professional associations will be essential to maintain best practices. *“Because if we all remain isolated then there will not be the necessary cohesion to defend best practices as a group and the agencies can take over”* (I-1). One respondent points out that the professional associations can strengthen the profession by attempting to embrace more interpreters and this is something that is already happening. *“They can open up, invite people in [...] to show people that it is possible to charge the reference prices [...] to show how a professional should behave, best practices. Why? Because if the associations don’t do this, the agencies will [...] but not in line with our expectations”* (I-9). The professional associations could take a more active role in the training of interpreters (I-12). Increasing the visibility of the profession is also on the agenda of the professional associations and they could inform the public about what interpreters do via paid articles in the press (I-12). The associations could also be present at trade fairs of event organizers, for example (I-11). An idea coming from SINTRA is to offer certain benefits to companies in exchange for an agreement that would oblige them to contract only translators and interpreters affiliated to the union (I-13). Currently, many agencies are successful because they are effective in the use of *Google Adwords*. *“They invest in online marketing. It is important for us to do the same.”* (I-9). Nowadays, clients often take the concrete form of secretaries of companies searching for interpreters on *Google* as well as purchasing departments under pressure to manage tight budgets. *“[W]e have to be up to date with these tendencies, embrace new technologies, create good websites, professionalize, do marketing, for us to be there on the first page of Google when the client does a search”* (I-9).

⁶³ The person who took office as President of Brazil in January 2019.

A generational change is currently underway in the profession, which is reflected particularly within APIC. Attention has been drawn to the risk that the achievements of the profession might get lost in the course of this transition: *“What is extremely important for the associations is to work firmly towards maintaining professional standards, so that the new members don’t lose sight of all that has been achieved by those generations that are about to retire”* (I-5).

It is unlikely that one single factor could benefit the profession more than rapid economic recovery. How the policies of the new government that took office in January 2019 will affect the profession over the coming years remains to be seen.

7 Discussion and conclusion

Tseng's professionalization model has been instrumental in providing guidance for this research and a logic to approaching and structuring the analysis. As pointed out above, there is not much merit in classifying a hypothetical level of professionalization of conference interpreting in Brazil according to the multi-phase model, because it seems so very obvious. *Phase III* is characterized by the establishment and existence of a professional association and *Phase IV* by legal protection and licensure of the profession. APIC has existed for almost half a century and despite various attempts at regulating the profession over the past decades, protection and licensure has not been achieved. Therefore, broadly speaking and according to the model's parameters, conference interpreting in Brazil is currently - and has been for almost 50 years - to be located in *Phase III* of the professionalization process. So what?

Taking a closer look, however, the classification is not that simple after all. Although Tseng does not explicitly state that a profession in *Phase III* no longer exhibits the characteristics of *Phase I (Market Disorder)*, it seems reasonable to assume so. However, this study has shown that a number of traits that characterize *Market Disorder* are indeed to be observed in the profession in Brazil today. Tseng (1992:44-45) describes *Phase I* in the following manner:

At this stage, the market is characterized by bitter competition among practitioners, involving measures such as advertising and price-cutting. Practitioners in the market cannot keep outsiders from entering practice [...] Recipients of the service either have very little understanding of what practitioners do or very little confidence in the services they receive. It is very likely that the public simply does not care about the quality of the services [...] What matters more to clients, in the absence of quality control, is usually price. Whoever demands the lowest fees gets the job.

The results of this study do not seem to offer grounds for qualifying the competition on the interpreting market as "bitter," however price competition is a reality and in that respect so is advertising and price-cutting. The emergence and growing presence of agencies has played its part in this development. It is equally true that since the profession is not legally protected and there is no licensure for conference interpreters, in effect practitioners cannot keep outsiders from entering the market. Moreover, there continue to be training institutions that release practitioners onto the market with a level of preparation that is questionable. Since price appears to be gaining ground in detriment of quality as a factor determining market decisions, these practitioners act as sources of disturbance, as represented by Arrow 2 of the

model. Beyond doubt there are many clients that understand what practitioners do and indeed have confidence in and do care about the quality of the service. However, it appears that this is not the reality on the market at large and there are indications of a limited understanding and lack of confidence in the service. As discussed, it appears that today in many situations, “whoever demands the lowest fees” does get the job.

Thus, returning to the initial research question of what degree of professionalization the occupation of conference interpreting has achieved in Brazil, in terms of Tseng’s model and keeping in mind the arguments expounded over the course of this paper, it can be concluded that characteristics of *Phases I, II*⁶⁴ and *III* can be observed. And if the somewhat marginal case of court interpreting is considered, then even some of the traits of *Phase IV* can be included. Of course, reality is more complex than a model can ever be. Nevertheless, it has become evident that in many ways the model serves to better understand the empirical data and on the other hand, that the empirical results support the model. Particularly regarding the formation of the first professional association, the development of the profession has indeed followed the lines laid out by Tseng’s model.

Furthermore, Tseng (1992:55) made it clear that the model understands professionalization as a “continuing process instead of a one-directional continuum where the completion of the process can be measured or defined,” and he insists on the “circular nature of the movement.” This circular nature is depicted in Figure 1 as Arrow 21. The results of this study would support another such Arrow from *Phase III* back to *Phase I*, because many elements of *Market Disorder* can apparently still pose challenges to the profession, despite the functioning of professional associations with their codes of ethics, admissions procedures, publicity work and collaborations with training institutions.

Tseng (1992:55-56) also draws attention to the importance of the “social context in which the emerging profession exists,” as well as “the nature of the profession.” He argues that in order to win social recognition, the “knowledge and service must be important and connected to the

⁶⁴ *Phase II* because, of course, the most traditional training institutions continue to consolidate *Consensus & Commitment* (Arrow 5) and because some of the less prestigious training institutions also create *Sources of Cohesion* in the form of graduates that believe strongly in the shared values and interests of the profession. It can even be argued that Arrow 6 in the model is analogous to the increasing presence and importance of conference interpreting in the professional translators’ association ABRATES, as well as this association’s annual conferences that in turn foster *Consensus & Commitment*.

wellbeing of the people in the eye of the public.” Conference interpreting in Brazil would not qualify for this category.

Another conclusion of this study is that, not surprisingly, the overall economic situation has been one of the most decisive factors affecting the profession over the past years. Although Tseng (1992:57) does mention that “the demand for the services in society” must be taken into consideration, the overall state of the economy is not accounted for by the model. Tseng is indeed very much aware of the difficulties and limitations inherent in proposing a professionalization model:

[V]ery few scholars propose models to account for the dynamics of professionalization, perhaps because the process is so complicated that any attempt to generalize the complexity through a model will prove to be futile. [...] Professionalization is a complicated social phenomenon which is difficult to generalize into a model without controversy [...] There are too many interrelated and interdependent factors involved in the process of professionalization to warrant any outright assertion about the sequence of those factors that must be developed along the way towards professionalization.

Irrespective of the degree to which the professionalization model holds true for the case of the profession in Brazil, this study has revealed a number of conflicting tendencies; tendencies that on the one hand appear to be detrimental to the profession and to the overall process of professionalization, and others that strengthen the profession and contribute to the professionalization process.

As mentioned, the economic and political crises suffered by the country over the past few years appear to be the factor that has affected the profession most severely. Overall demand for interpreting services has fallen while the overall number of interpreters has increased. In times of economic slowdown, the purchasing departments of companies - that nowadays are often responsible for contracting interpreters for the private sector - are faced with pressure to reduce costs. Combined with more competition on the market, this results in a downward pressure on the fees professional interpreters can charge. Price gains precedence over quality.

In this context, agencies could improve their market position and turn into a major source of disturbance. An increasing tendency to procure services over the internet seems to have further benefited agencies due to their ability to position their services strategically, engaging in marketing and advertising irrespective of the quality of the services offered. Agencies have

also had a detrimental effect on the profession by undercutting prices and thereby receiving large contracts by the public sector, as the case of Brasilia has shown.

Another factor that affects the profession negatively is as increasing proficiency in English among Brazilian professionals of different areas, as well as among younger generations of foreigners coming to Brazil for business, conferences or other matters. For one, a tendency towards the primacy of English makes interpreting into and from other ‘smaller’ languages obsolete in the best of cases. In the worst, *English as a lingua franca* will replace interpreting services altogether at an increasing rate.

While all of these factors are detrimental to the professionalization process, this study has also revealed a number of forces strengthening the profession. The growing field of interpreting studies shows signs that it can contribute to a stronger professional identity and more cohesion among professionals. Although some important training institutions have temporarily or indefinitely shut down, a number of private initiatives have emerged that appear to offer high-quality interpreter training. A tendency has been observed that many new professionals entering the market have a high level of professionalism and dedication. The annual conference of ABRATES has become increasingly significant for the profession and contributes to making it more unified and consolidated. The professional association APIC has facilitated accession, by which it can potentially become more representative of the profession and thereby better promote its interests. These are all factors that can potentially contribute to an increase in professionalization in the future. Nevertheless, despite these positive tendencies, it cannot be denied that the recent crises have had a drastic impact on the profession and it is fair to say that the profession itself is currently in crisis.

7.1 Limitations

Exploring a subject about which very little has been published entails a number of inherent challenges that result in a set of limitations affecting the validity of the results. First and foremost, this is a master’s and not a doctoral thesis: time and resources are more limited and so is the scope of the paper itself. Related to these restrictions, there is also a geographic limitation. São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are the country’s two largest centres for conference

interpreting, so of course it is legitimate to have focused the investigation on these two cities. Nevertheless, this focus will invariably lead to a certain geographical bias that cannot be disregarded, particularly considering the sheer size of the country: Brazil has a population of over 200 million and has over a dozen cities with more than one million inhabitants.

Another limitation is related to the scope and therefore also depth of the investigation. Since not much has been published in English on the conference interpreting profession as it is practiced in Brazil, at this point providing a broad overview makes more sense than digging deeply into any one particular aspect. This broad approach must inevitably come at the price of less analytical depth. In compensation, at the end of this chapter some suggestions for further research that have emerged over the course of the investigation are presented.

There are also a number of limitations with regard to the original research design itself. For one, due to the scope and nature of the present study, it is possible that certain aspects of the topic might not gain the attention they deserve. Many of the topics dealt with by this study would require more research to attain a deeper understanding of the matter. Another limiting issue is that of subjectivity: although a total of 16 experts were interviewed and although many of the declarations overlapped in numerous regards, the data collected by this investigation will still always depend on the individual perspectives of the interviewees. So by default, this paper does not deal with objective truth but rather with an intersubjective reality. The possibility that another expert in the field might disagree with some of the argumentation presented, can therefore not be discarded. It should be kept in mind that what this research offers consists in perspectives, tendencies, possibilities and interpretations; there is no pretense of having understood every detail of the vast and multifaceted reality of the profession, nor that any ultimate truths can be derived from this thesis. It is rather one more step in shedding light on an area that has received little academic attention so far.

Another point to be considered is that the data underlying this inquiry is the result of interviews with 16 professional conference interpreters. In contrast, there are currently 63 AIIC interpreters (AIIC 2018f) and 142 APIC interpreters (2018a) registered in Brazil. Apart from these over 200 associated professionals, there will be hundreds more who work as interpreters around the country. The sample is thus relatively small and the degree to which it is representative for the group of conference interpreters as a whole is questionable. Many of the interviews were in fact the result of recommendations from other interpreters interviewed.

Another decisive factor was of course the general willingness to contribute to this research project. In relation to this willingness, one point in common among the interviewees was that they all consider themselves dedicated professionals and identify themselves as pertaining to the community of professional conference interpreters in Brazil, as indicated by the high proportion of professional association members among the interviewees. It can be assumed that a commitment to the profession, a common factor among the interpreters interviewed, contributed to the willingness to collaborate. Furthermore, the time frame for the interviews (October to December 2018) coincided with the high season for conference interpreting work in Brazil. A number of requested and confirmed interviews could in the end not be held because the interpreter was either traveling or busy working. Other requests were never answered. Despite the fact that in general, the professionals I managed to get in touch with were extremely cooperative and helpful, the logistics involved still turned every interview that actually materialised into a small success. Many more interviews could have been conducted, however in the face of the limited time and resources available, what has been achieved in terms of data collection can be considered a success.

Despite the somewhat limited sample, the fact that there were considerable agreements and common viewpoints among the interviewees may indicate that this group represents the perspectives of a significant group among the total population of conference interpreters in Brazil. However, this is purely speculative.

The status of the researcher as a ‘semi-insider’ has already been mentioned. It might be expected for this status to create certain barriers to the depth of the information attained. It is imaginable that specific, more delicate or controversial topics that might be shared and discussed with a true ‘insider’ - with somebody who already knows about them -, might be avoided with a ‘semi-insider.’ This is not to suggest that it might have been the case in the interviews conducted, however the possibility that this dynamic might affect the data should at least not be completely discarded.

7.2 Questions for further study

The following is a summary of some of the questions that emerged over the course of this research, questions that could be worthy of further study.

Since it appears that the economic situation of the country is the factor that most severely impacts the profession, it could be interesting to explore the correlation between different phases within the economic cycle and the market situation for conference interpreting services in the past. How have the different phases of economic growth and stagnation as well as episodes of political turmoil in Brazil affected the profession?

The present study focused mainly on the perspective of established professionals, mostly members of the professional associations and in many cases trained at the most prestigious institutions. It would be interesting to study the profession mainly from the vantage point of practitioners, who have received training at what has been called ‘boot-camp’ courses, or at courses that offer combined undergraduate degrees of translation and interpreting.

A different geographic focus would definitely be of interest. What issues does the profession face in the Northeast of the country? How has the market for conference interpreting services developed over the years in the South? A study of one single city could also be interesting: The history of conference interpreting in Brasilia.

Over the decades, there have been a number of attempts at regulating the profession. It would be interesting to study what form these attempts took and why they were not successful. What role did the professional associations play in these processes?

Another topic of study could be the relationships between the various associations. How do they collaborate? In which areas do they compete? Some of these issues have been touched upon, however a more thorough investigation would surely yield interesting results.

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Annex I – List of interviews conducted

- I-1. Interview conducted in Catete, Rio de Janeiro, on 27.10.2018.
- I-2. Interview conducted in Jardim Botânico, Rio de Janeiro, on 30.10.2018.
- I-3. Interview conducted at PUC-Rio, Gávea, Rio de Janeiro, on 31.10.2018.
- I-4. Interview conducted in Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, on 5.11.2018.
- I-5. Interview conducted via Skype on 6.11.2018.
- I-6. Interview conducted in Chácara Santo Antônio, São Paulo, on 15.11.2018.
- I-7. Interview conducted in Pinheiros, São Paulo, on 15.11.2018.
- I-8. Interview conducted in Jardim Paulista, São Paulo, on 16.11.2018.
- I-9. Interview conducted in Jardim Paulista, São Paulo, on 16.11.2018.
- I-10. Interview conducted in Jardim Paulista, São Paulo, on 16.11.2018.
- I-11. Interview conducted in Jardim Paulista, São Paulo, on 16.11.2018.
- I-12. Interview conducted at USP, São Paulo, on 19.11.2018.
- I-13. Interview conducted in Higienópolis, São Paulo, on 20.11.2018.
- I-14. Interview conducted in Jardim Paulista, São Paulo, on 21.11.2018.
- I-15. Interview conducted in UERJ, Rio de Janeiro, on 22.11.2018.
- I-16. Interview conducted in Grajaú, Rio de Janeiro, on 4.12.2018.

Annex II - Interview questions

The following set of questions served as a rough guideline for the expert interviews conducted.⁶⁵

Personal questions

- Please introduce yourself (working languages, professional domicile, experience in the profession, etc.)
- How many days do you work as an interpreter on average per year?
- What percentage of your income derives from your work as an interpreter?
- What is your opinion on the status and recognition of interpreters in Brazilian society? Is it changing?
- Do you identify with the class of Brazilian interpreters?
- What are the main challenges that conference interpreters in Brazil have to face when exercising their profession?

Questions on interpreter training

- How did you train as a conference interpreter?
- What were the theoretical foundations of your training / what did the training consist in (methodology, structure, exercises, duration, etc.)?
- What other training courses exist in the country?
- Do you believe that the majority of interpreters on the market have received solid training and are competent professionals or are there many laypeople active on the market?
- What is your opinion on how conference interpreters are trained today in Brazil? What is going well? What could be improved?
- What changes have there been in conference interpreter training in Brazil over the past years? What are the current tendencies?
- What is the academic background of the majority of professional interpreters in Brazil?

⁶⁵ Translated from Portuguese into English for your convenience by myself.

Questions on professional associations

- Why do you belong to the associations you belong to?
- How has joining the associations affected your professional career?
- How has APIC changed over the years?
- Why has APIC facilitated accession over the past years?
- How do you evaluate the work of APIC? Does it help to protect the market against encroachers? How?
- Is the APIC code of ethics being respected?
- What is your opinion on the campaign for the best sound technician?
- Does APIC engage in PR work to defend the interests of the profession?
- What is the significance of ABRATES for conference interpreters in Brazil?
- What is the significance of AIIC in Brazil?
- What is your opinion on the future of the professional associations? What tendencies are there?
- In general, is there cohesion among interpreters and a commitment with the development of the profession?

Questions on market control

- How much flexibility do you have when it comes to determining your fees?
- Do you feel pressure to reduce your fees due to the competition of other interpreters?
- Do you work with agencies? What has your experience been?
- What is your opinion on the role of agencies on the market? What tendencies do you observe?
- In general, before an assignment, do you receive sufficient information with enough time to allow for due preparation?
- Do you generally receive support from contractors and speakers to facilitate your work?
- Do you believe that today clients understand the conference interpreting profession better than a few years back?
- What is your opinion on the remuneration that interpreters receive in Brazil? What tendencies exist?

- How is the conduct among colleagues? Is there a sense of community and solidarity?
- In Brazil, is there one market for conference interpreting or are there many? What markets exist geographically? What markets exist in terms of quality?
- In general, do you and your colleagues have control over your working conditions?

Questions on legal foundations and certifications

- Are there initiatives on the part of the professional associations to achieve regulation and legal protection for the profession?
- Is the accreditation of ABRATES in any way relevant to conference interpreters?
- How relevant is the certification of sworn translator for the conference interpreting profession?
- How do the associations of sworn translators work? Are they relevant for conference interpreters?

Questions about future tendencies

- What is your opinion on how the profession will develop over the coming years?
- What factors inhibit an increasing professionalization in Brazil?
- Which measures could strengthen the profession?
- How will digital technologies affect the profession in the future?
- How has the current economic and political crisis affected the work of interpreters in Brazil?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about the professionalization of conference interpreting in Brazil?

Abstract (English)

The present paper explores the profession of conference interpreting as it is practiced in Brazil through the lens of the notion of ‘professionalization.’ A strategy of methodological triangulation is employed that consists in the synthesis of an interpretative document analysis as well as qualitative content analysis of data collected from 16 semi-structured expert interviews. The theoretical framework is provided by the professionalization model proposed by Joseph Tseng in 1992, from which a number of professionalization indicators are derived that serve as guidance for answering the central research question, ‘How professionalized is the occupation of conference interpreting in Brazil?’ The study provides a broad overview of the profession as it is practiced in Brazil today, including a historical contextualisation and a discussion on some of the central dimensions of the profession as well as the market for conference interpreting services in Brazil. Over the 50 years that have passed since the creation of the first professional association, important advances in terms of its professionalization have been achieved. This thesis concludes that conference interpreting in Brazil is a highly dynamic profession in which there are tendencies towards increasing professionalization, particularly due to advances in the field of interpreter training thanks to important initiatives on the part of a number of professionals. A tendency towards consolidation of the profession has been observed that is further supported by the emerging academic field of interpreting studies in Brazil. At the same time, the political crises and economic recession the country has been suffering over the past years, as well as the increasing presence of agencies that have been described as ‘predatory’ on the market, have had detrimental effects on the profession. Technological advancements, an improvement of language skills among professionals in the economy at large as well as political and economic uncertainty make the outlook for the future of the profession in Brazil rather bleak.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Die vorliegende Arbeit befasst sich mit der Professionalisierung des Konferenzdolmetschens, wie es in Brasilien betrieben wird, im Lichte des Konzepts „Professionalisierung.“ Eine Strategie der methodologischen Triangulation wird angewandt, bestehend aus einer Synthese zwischen einer interpretativen Dokumentenanalyse und einer qualitativen Inhaltsanalyse der Daten, die im Zuge von 16 semistrukturierten Experteninterviews gesammelt wurden. Der theoretische Rahmen wird von Tsengs 1992 vorgeschlagenem Professionalisierungsmodell gestellt, von dem eine Reihe von Professionalisierungsindikatoren abgeleitet. Diese dienen als Leitlinien für die Beantwortung der zentralen Fragestellung: „Wie professionalisiert ist der Beruf des Konferenzdolmetschens in Brasilien?“ Die Arbeit bietet einen Überblick über den Beruf, wie er heute in Brasilien praktiziert wird, mitsamt einer historischen Kontextualisierung sowie einer Diskussion einiger zentraler Dimensionen des Berufs sowie des Marktes für Konferenzdolmetschdienstleistungen in Brasilien. Im Laufe der 50 Jahre, die seit der Gründung des ersten Berufsverbandes vergangen sind, wurden maßgebliche Fortschritte im Sinne der Professionalisierung erzielt. Die Untersuchung kommt zu dem Schluss, dass es sich beim Konferenzdolmetschen in Brasilien um einen hochgradig dynamischen Beruf handelt, in dem es Tendenzen in Richtung einer zunehmenden Professionalisierung gibt, insbesondere im Bereich der Dolmetscherausbildung dank wichtiger Initiativen einiger Leute vom Fach. Eine Tendenz hin zu einer zunehmenden Konsolidierung des Berufs ist zu beobachten, die durch den aufkommenden akademischen Bereich der Dolmetschwissenschaft zusätzlich gefördert wird. Zugleich führten die politischen Krisen und die wirtschaftliche Rezession, unter denen das Land seit einigen Jahren leidet, sowie auch die zunehmende Präsenz von als „raubtierhaft“ bezeichneten Agenturen zu negativen Auswirkungen auf den Beruf. Technologische Fortschritte, eine Verbesserung der Sprachkenntnisse von Fachleuten in der Wirtschaft insgesamt, sowie eine Ungewissheit über die politische und wirtschaftliche Zukunft des Landes sorgen für eher düstere Prognosen für den Beruf in Brasilien.