

## **Towards a Dynamic Role Model of Liaison Interpreters: self-descriptions of practitioners in Estonia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In 2003-2006, a study on the evolving role model of liaison interpreters in Estonia was carried out (Mullamaa 2005; Mullamaa 2006a). The study offered insights into a specific translation culture (Prunč 1997) and illuminated how a professional role is developing in tandem with socio-political and economic changes. The study specifically shed light on the way interpreters view their role a) against the background of working in a totalitarian regime, b) at the beginning of the independence period of a small state, and c) through the different developing stages of democratic evolution and the rising market economy. The results suggest that the 16-year time-span in Estonia after the collapse of the Soviet Union has offered favourable conditions for the development of some principles and strategies that might not have been possible in a more ideologically dogmatic political climate. I applied the methodological framework of ethnography and the principles of chaining; 14 practitioners were identified and interviewed. I analyzed the transcripts and looked at 217 excerpts in which practicing liaison interpreters describe their role. This article sums up the main results of the study.

**KEYWORDS:** liaison interpreting, ethics and neutrality, political and socio-cultural context, Codes of professional practice, Code of ethics, professional roles, interpreter interaction, Code model vs. dialogism, transition societies, Estonia.