

Geopolitics: An Eternal Dominance

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Abstract

This end-of-studies project brings together four interconnected parts: an internship report, a French-to-English article translation, a translation commentary, and a closing chapter; into a single argument: that language, power, and geopolitics are not separate domains, they are woven into one another at every level of professional and intellectual life.

The work opens with a personal statement that frames the question most translation students encounter at some point in their education: whether artificial intelligence has rendered the human translator obsolete. Rather than dismissing the anxiety, this thesis takes it seriously and answers it through evidence; theoretical, practical, and mainly, lived. The answer I arrived at is not a defensive one, it is a confident articulation of what translation, at its full depth, actually is and what it demands of those who practice it.

The first part consists of an internship report documenting three months spent in a business development role at DoorKnock Pro, a Canadian-Tunisian software startup offering a field sales management platform. The experience proved to be considerably richer than a conventional commercial placement.

Cold outreach campaigns initially yielded no conversions, not for lack of product quality, but because brand infrastructure had not yet been built to support trust transfer with unknown prospects. The lesson drawn was structural: in a startup, tactical execution without strategic foundation does not merely underperform, it actively damages the credibility needed to eventually sell. More intellectually significant was a self-initiated proposal to localise the

DoorKnock Pro application into Arabic, targeting the Gulf Cooperation Council markets. This research drew directly on my academic training in translation studies, revealing the full scope of what localisation involves: not merely the translation of interface strings, but the rethinking of layout direction, typographic conventions, cultural expectations, and UX register for our Arabic linguistic world. The proposal attracted real commercial interest before being interrupted by geopolitical events in the Middle East; a disruption that, paradoxically, provided the most important intellectual insight of the entire project.

That insight is the connective tissue running through the rest of the thesis. When Iranian military strikes realigned the diplomatic posture of Gulf states overnight, the sales campaign could no longer proceed. Geopolitics, in that moment, was not a background condition — it was the foreground reality, the substrate on which all economic activity rests.

This experience led directly to the choice of translation text for the second part..

Part Two presents a full English translation of Pascal Lorot's foundational article "De la géopolitique à la géoéconomie," originally published in the inaugural issue of the *Revue française de Géoéconomie* in spring 1997 and reprinted in 2009. The article is the first published in France to introduce the concept of geoeconomics as a systematic discipline, arguing that the end of the Cold War did not eliminate interstate rivalry but redirected it from the military to the economic sphere. Where states once competed through armies and territorial conquest, they now compete through commercial strategies, technology acquisition, and market penetration; with economic health replacing military might as the primary measure of national power. The translation of this text was not an arbitrary academic exercise. It was an act of intellectual recognition: the article described, in theoretical terms, what I had directly lived during my internship. Translating Lorot's argument from French into English meant inhabiting both its content and its form simultaneously, navigating the particular challenges of a text that is simultaneously an academic article, a political manifesto, and the founding gesture of an entire discipline.

The third part offers an extended translation commentary on that process. It moves systematically through the principal categories of translation difficulty the text presented: the genre instability between academic and polemical registers; the structural divergence between

French and English academic prose; the terminological complexity of translating a neologism — geoeconomics — in the very act of its conceptual creation; and the challenge of handling Lorot's extensive quotations from Edward Luttwak's English-language work, which had been mediated through a French translation and now needed to be rendered back into English.

Key terms examined in depth include 'puissance', conflictualité, 'rayonnement', and 'espace fluidifié', each of which resists clean translation and demands an interpretive decision that is simultaneously linguistic, cultural, and, above all, political. The commentary concludes with a comparative analysis of one central paragraph as rendered by naive AI, AI prompted with explicit translation guidelines, and my own human translation. The comparison demonstrates that while machine output can approach formal correctness, it does so without the depth of understanding that produces correct choices knowingly, with documented awareness of what is sacrificed and why. Human translators do not merely produce equivalent text; we produce a theorised translation, one in which every choice is accountable.

The fourth part, the closing chapter, draws the threads together into a broader argument about the professional future of translation. Starting from the premise that political literacy; the analytical capacity to understand how power operates internationally and how language serves or conceals those operations; is not optional enrichment for translators but a professional necessity, it calls for substantive reform of how the discipline trains its practitioners. Entry standards should reflect the full complexity of what translators do; curricula should integrate international relations, legal literacy, area studies, and digital competency alongside linguistic training; and the discipline's relationship with artificial intelligence should be one of confident, theorised deployment rather than either denial or uncritical dependence. I ended the thesis with a claim that is simultaneously a conclusion and a manifesto: machines translate words; human translators translate arguments, contexts, histories, and silences — and know, at every step, the difference between what was said and what could have been said.

Knowledge is irreducibly human, it is the ground on which the profession's future must be built.

Keywords: translation studies, geoeconomics, geopolitics, app localisation, political literacy, human vs. machine translation, business development, French-English translation, Pascal Lorot, Edward Luttwak, soft power