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World Politics in Translation

Power, Relationality and Difference in
Global Cooperation

Edited by
Tobias Berger and Alejandro Esguerra



World Politics in Translation

Virtually all pertinent issues that the world faces today – such as nuclear proliferation, climate change, the spread of infectious disease and economic globalization – imply objects that move. However, surprisingly little is known about how the actual objects of world politics are constituted, how they move and how they change while moving. This book addresses these questions through the concept of ‘translation’ – the simultaneous processes of object constitution, transportation and transformation. Translations occur when specific forms of knowledge about the environment, international human rights norms or water policies consolidate, travel and change.

World Politics in Translation conceptualizes ‘translation’ for International Relations by drawing on theoretical insights from Literary Studies, Postcolonial Scholarship and Science and Technology Studies. The individual chapters explore how the concept of translation opens new perspectives on development cooperation, the diffusion of norms and organizational templates, the performance in and of international organizations or the politics of international security governance.

This book constitutes an excellent resource for students and scholars in the fields of Politics, International Relations, Social Anthropology, Development Studies and Sociology. Combining empirically grounded case studies with methodological reflection and theoretical innovation, the book provides a powerful and productive introduction to world politics in translation.

Tobias Berger is Assistant Professor of Transnational Politics of the Global South at the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

Alejandro Esguerra is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Potsdam, Germany.

“Examining the potent role of seemingly mundane objects, instruments, and facts in global politics, this volume makes a key contribution to our understanding of power, expertise and practice in the contemporary world. In these pages, it becomes clear just how powerful the concept of translation can be – enabling the contributors to both map the various ways in which people, objects and ideas can move from one space into another, and to recognize the slippages and tensions that can result.”

—*Jacqueline Best, Professor, School of Political Studies,
University of Ottawa, Canada*

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 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK


Centre for
**Global
Cooperation
Research**



SPONSORED BY THE

Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-1-138-63057-4 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-20933-3 (ebk)

Typeset in Goudy
by Keystroke, Neville Lodge, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton

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Acknowledgements

To translate is to bridge gaps and forge new relations with others. In this sense, this book has been an exercise in translation involving a group of scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds, including International Relations, Policy Studies, Medical and Legal Anthropology as well as Science and Technology Studies. We would like to express our gratitude to the authors of this volume for engaging in a lively conversation on how to further translate ‘translation’ into the disciplinary world of International Relations. It has been a highly inspiring exchange that brought about *World Politics in Translation*.

Two international workshops facilitated our discussions for this volume. The first workshop was organized by the Käte Hamburger Kolleg (KHK)/Centre for Global Cooperation Research, Duisburg in October 2015 and opened by Richard Freeman’s Käte Hamburger Lecture. We would like to thank all participants to this workshop as well as colleagues at the KHK for their encouraging support, especially Katja Freistein, Frank Gadinger, Rakchanok Chatjuthamard, Markus Böckenförde and Matthias Schuler. The directors of the KHK Tobias Debiel, Claus Leggewie and Dirk Messner as well as Patricia Rinck, Jennifer Apé, Saina Klein and Susanne Brunnbauer were of great help in the process of putting together this volume. Our second workshop took place at the University of Potsdam in October 2016. It was facilitated by the DFG Research Training Group ‘WIPCAD – Wicked Problems, Contested Administrations’. We would like to thank the speaker of the RTG Harald Fuhr as well as Kim Trinh Quang for making this workshop possible. Special thanks also to Susanna Fazio for her support in finalizing the manuscript.

A number of colleagues and friends provided valuable comments – especially, the Myxa Research Group Berlin (Nicole Helmerich, Benjamin Faude, Lea Hartung, Anne Koch and Alexandros Tokhi), Lydia Malmedie, Diane Bombart and Sebastian Schindler. We also wish to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback as well as Margaret Farrelly at Routledge for her flexibility, help and guidance in seeing the project through.



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Contributors

Uli Beisel is Assistant Professor in Culture and Technology at the Department of Anthropology of Bayreuth University (Germany) and holds a PhD in Human Geography from the Open University (UK). She has worked on human-mosquito-parasite entanglements in malaria control in Ghana and Sierra Leone and on the translation of new health technologies in Uganda and Rwanda. Her new research is looking at trust in biomedicine and its relation to health care infrastructures after the Ebola epidemic in a comparative project in Sierra Leone, Ghana and Uganda. Beisel's work has been published by *inter alia Science as Culture, Society and Space, Biosocieties* and *Geoforum*.

Tobias Berger is Assistant Professor for Transnational Politics of the Global South at Freie Universität Berlin. He held visiting fellowships at the Department of Law and Anthropology at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale and the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. His research focuses on the interaction between global norms and non-state institutions in the Global South. His book on *Global Norms and Local Courts: Translating the Rule of Law in Bangladesh* is forthcoming with Oxford University Press in 2017.

Endre Dányi is currently Lecturer and post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Sociology at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. Inspired by Actor-Network Theory (ANT), his PhD thesis focused on the ways in which liberal democracy can be understood as a diverse set of material and discursive practices held together by a parliament. In his *Habilitation*, Dányi examines three instances when liberal democracy breaks down or reaches its limits: the European refugee crisis, global drug policy and indigenous politics in Northern Australia. In addition to teaching and doing research, Dányi is also Founding Editor of Mattering Press, an open-access book publisher.

Alejandro Esguerra is a post-doctoral researcher in the DFG research group 'Wicked Problems, Contested Administration' (WIPCAD) at the University of Potsdam, Germany. He obtained his PhD at the Freie Universität Berlin and conducted research at Cornell University, the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, UFZ, as well as the Centre for Global Cooperation Research in Duisburg. His work is concerned with the role of knowledge and

practice in international relations theory, transnational private governance and epistemic authority in global environmental politics. His most recent publications are, with Silke Beck and Rolf Lidskog, 'Stakeholder engagement in the making: IPBES legitimization politics' in *Global Environmental Politics* as well as, with Nicole Helmerich and Thomas Risse, *Sustainability Politics and Limited Statehood: Contesting New Modes of Governance* (Palgrave Macmillan 2017).

Richard Freeman is Professor of Social Science and Public Policy and Co-Director of the Academy of Government at the University of Edinburgh. He teaches Knowledge and Practice at the Academy's Master's programme in Public Policy, as well as Theory and Method in the Graduate School of Social and Political Science. He is a former Fulbright Scholar and Jean Monnet Fellow and has held visiting positions at the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg in Bremen, the Institut d'Études Politiques (Sciences Po) in Paris and Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. His research is concerned with knowing and doing in politics. It draws on public policy as well as social theory, the sociology of knowledge and science and technology studies in exploring public action. His most recent books are, with Steve Sturdy, *Knowledge in Policy: Embodied, Inscribed, Enacted* (Policy Press 2014) and, with Jan-Peter Voß, *Knowing Governance: The Epistemic Construction of Political Order* (Palgrave Macmillan 2015).

Katharina Glaab is Associate Professor in Global Change and International Relations at the Department of International Development and Environment Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Her research and teaching revolve around questions of normative change and the politics of knowledge in global environmental politics. She has published on norms in international relations, conflicts around agricultural biotechnology in China and India, faith actors and climate change, as well as critical research on power.

Rebecca-Lea Korinek is a research fellow at the WZB – Berlin Social Science Centre, Germany. In her ongoing dissertation, Korinek compares how the practices used by national food safety agencies to build and cultivate politico-epistemic authority have changed in recent decades. Her research interests include the co-production of political and epistemic authority in contested policy fields. Her empirical research focuses on the fields of food safety, consumer, energy and mobility policy. In particular, she engages with the modes of policy-making from the perspective of behavioural sciences as well as with multi-stakeholder involvement. She has published in *Public Administration, Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences* and *der moderne staat (dms) – Zeitschrift für Public Policy, Recht und Management* as well as in edited volumes with Oxford University Press and Palgrave Macmillan among others.

Noemi Lendvai-Bainton is a senior lecturer in Comparative Public Policy at the University of Bristol. Her interest in critical policy studies, Europeanization of

social policy and the politics of translation has been formative for her co-authored book with John Clarke, David Bainton and Paul Stubbs: *Making Policy Move – Towards a Politics of Translation and Assemblage* (Policy Press 2015). Her most recent work focuses on the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism and its transnational co-production in Europe.

Arlena S. Liggins is a PhD student in the DFG-funded project ‘Translating global health technologies: standardization and organizational learning in health care provision in Uganda and Rwanda’ at the University of Bayreuth. While her research interest generally evolves around (the emergence of) non-communicable diseases, Liggins is presently focusing on technological aspects of diagnosing and testing diabetes in Uganda.

Farhad Mukhtarov is a public policy scholar specializing in studying water resources and the environment with a focus on the politics of knowledge. He is currently a researcher at the Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development at Utrecht University and an adjunct senior research fellow at the Institute of Water Policy at the National University of Singapore. His work has appeared in numerous international peer-reviewed journals including *Environmental Science & Policy*, *Policy Sciences*, *Global Governance*, *Globalizations*, *Policy & Politics* and edited volumes with major university presses, such as Oxford University Press.

Sebastian Schindler is a research associate in the working group ‘International Organisations’ at the Cluster of Excellence ‘Normative Orders’. His main research areas are theories of international relations (IR), international organizations and international political theory. He has published articles in *International Theory*, *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, *Journal of International Organization Studies*, *Leviathan* and *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*. In December 2016 he defended his PhD thesis at Goethe University Frankfurt with highest honours (‘summa cum laude’). His essay ‘Man versus state: contested agency in the United Nations’ was awarded *Millennium’s* Northedge Prize in 2014. Since April 2016 he has been speaker of the Young Researchers’ Group in the International Relations section of the German Political Science Association.

Katrin Seidel is a post-doctoral research fellow at the Department of Law and Anthropology at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale. Between 2015 and 2016 she was a fellow at Käte Hamburger Kolleg/ Centre for Global Cooperation Research. Based on her interdisciplinary background (Law and African/Asian Studies), her research is situated at the intersection of legal pluralism, heterogeneous statehood and governance. Seidel’s studies are concerned with the interdependent relationships between plural normative and judicial orders at different levels of regulations as well as with the intertwinements of the respective social actors involved. Her current research focus is the comparative analysis of post-conflict constitution-making processes in South Sudan and Somaliland.

Holger Stritzel is a lecturer at King's College London. He holds a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and specializes in security theory, transatlantic relations and German foreign policy. He has published articles in various national and international journals including *European Journal of International Relations*, *Review of International Studies*, *Security Dialogue* and *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*. His most recent book *Security in Translation* (Palgrave Macmillan 2014) and a recent book chapter in the edited volume *Concepts in World Politics* (Sage 2016) explore the spread and translation of security concepts in international affairs.

1 Introduction

The objects of translation

Tobias Berger and Alejandro Esguerra

Contemporary world politics is characterized by the rapid movement of people, goods, services and ideas around the globe. Virtually all the pertinent issues that the world faces today – from nuclear proliferation to climate change, the spread of infectious diseases and economic globalization – imply objects that move. While International Relations (IR) scholarship has produced sophisticated bodies of work on all of the above, surprisingly little is known about how the actual objects of world politics are constituted, how they move and how they change while moving.

In this volume, we propose the notion of translation as an analytical lens to address these questions. In its most basic definition, ‘translation’ describes simultaneous processes of transportation and transformation. Translations thus occur when, for example, specific forms of knowledge about the environment, international human rights norms or water policies change as they travel from one place to another. Analysing world politics in translation thus points us to these changes, and the high degree of uncertainty that they imply as neither norms nor knowledge, policies nor instruments can ever be fully controlled by their senders; instead, they are constantly altered in the processes of translation.

The empirical case studies in this volume are concerned with moving objects in various policy fields. Objects of world politics come in different forms: there are objects such as global health, the climate or gender, as well as objects concerned with the *doing of politics* (Voß and Freeman 2016). Examples include the organizational form of the project within the World Health Organization (WHO), instruments such as a climate emissions trading system or documents used for equal pay campaigns of a transnational gender activist network. All of these objects share in common the fact that they are neither purely ideational nor exclusively material; rather, they are hybrid entities consisting of various actors, norms, knowledge and material components (see Allan 2017). Understanding this mix of entities as objects opens the space to inquire how these objects are constituted, how they travel and how they change while moving and settling anew. When we analyse world politics in translation, we look at these objects and ask three overarching questions:

- 1 What makes these objects move?
- 2 What do they do while moving?
- 3 What happens to them as they move from one place to another?

In short, we argue in response to these questions that (a) making objects move requires power. More precisely, it requires the power to represent objects in different places. Although power is a key analytical category in IR (Barnett and Duvall 2005), this specific representational dimension has received comparatively scant attention, primarily because the kind of objects that we are interested in have generally been simply taken for granted within established accounts of world politics. (b) When these objects move, they forge new relations by connecting people, as well as things and materials. This relationality is thus a key outcome of processes of translation. (c) The same applies to the production of difference. When moving from one place to another, objects are constantly recontextualized, being made sense of differently by different actors located in different contexts. Power, relationality and difference are thus key features of world politics in translation.

While we will discuss power, relationality and difference in greater depth in the conclusion, this introductory chapter sets the scene for the subsequent analysis in the following chapters. It proceeds in three steps. First, we turn to the genealogies of ‘translation’ to render central theoretical insights fruitful for our analysis of world politics. These central insights are taken from Literary Studies, Anthropology, Postcolonial Scholarship and Science and Technology Studies. While differing in their respective conceptualizations of ‘translation’, all of these approaches move beyond translation as an exclusively linguistic phenomenon. Translation is thus not something that happens only between two or more languages; instead, translations are complex social and political processes in which new meanings are created and new relations forged, they involve people and languages as much as material artefacts and they are always fraught with relationships of power and domination. While bearing invaluable insights, these conceptualizations of translation are not simply translatable into the world of IR. Theories never travel without transformation and betrayal (Best and Walters 2013, 333). Indeed, it is exactly these betrayals and their innovative potential that lies at the centre of the following analyses.

Second, we scrutinize these transformations as we investigate the ways in which the notion of translation has been received by IR scholars. On the one hand, scholars investigating the diffusion of norms and ideas have increasingly started to pay attention to the processes of translations. Whereas the diffusion literature has developed increasingly sophisticated models of the ways in which norms move from one place to another, the myriad ways in which the meaning of norms change has received rather scant attention. Building on earlier accounts of norm localization, recent norm research has thus shown how both the meaning of norms and the social and political practice of the context in which the norm is translated change in the processes of translation (Berger 2017; Zimmermann forthcoming). On the other hand, the notion of translation has also gained recent prominence in the analysis of international institutions. Here, the focus has been on the processes in which knowledge about global phenomena is (at least temporarily) consensualized and stabilized (Esguerra 2014). Making things like piracy or climate change known in the international institutions that have been designed to govern them is

also a translational task, as recent scholarship at the intersection of IR and Science and Technology Studies (STS) has shown (Bueger 2015; Allan 2017). Therefore, translations unfold in two directions: first, from one to many, as in the case of norms translation where one norm is translated differently in different places; and second, in the opposite direction, from many to one, for example when a multiplicity of insights is assembled in the representation of one object (like piracy) that can be both known by and governed through international institutions.

Third, we translate ‘translation’ further. We argue that by focusing on the objects of translation, we open the intellectual space for understanding world politics differently. This different understanding is less a repudiation of canonical accounts in IR; rather, it is a change in perspective, which brings new objects, places and actors into focus. This new perspective significantly contributes to existing scholarship on modes of interaction and negotiations (Risse 2000), international organizations (Barnett and Finnemore 2004), knowledge and power (Haas 1992; Adler and Bernstein 2005), the diffusion of norms and regional organizations (Acharya 2004; Börzel and Risse 2011) as well as practice and discourse approaches (Adler and Pouliot 2011; Epstein 2008). More specifically, we explain how institutions emerge, are reproduced and known (Chapters 6, 8 and 9 this volume), how they know and practise the objects that they govern (Chapters 2 and 11 this volume) as well as how negotiations unfold in multi-actor arenas (Chapter 10 this volume). In terms of diffusion, this volume contributes to norm emergence and subsidiarity (Chapter 3 this volume) as well as the domestic politics of localization (Chapters 4 and 5 this volume). In addition, the volume adds to key issue areas of contemporary world politics such as public health, global economic governance and international security.

In all of these fields, the translation perspective forces us to more strongly appreciate the messiness, ambiguity and constant slippages that occur when people, things and materials travel from one place to another (Best 2012). On the one hand, it allows us to see how anything that travels always also changes, thus pointing us to the puzzling plurality that emerges from the diffusion or transfer of seemingly stable, tight and uniform objects like global norms or specific policies. On the other hand, ‘translation’ also points us to the myriad ways in which people, things and materials can (at least temporarily) be bound together, thus explaining how the objects that ought to be governed by global institutions like ‘the climate’, ‘migration’ or ‘global health’ are constituted in the first place. Translation is thus also a new answer to the old question of what makes the world hang together (Ruggie 1998). To start teasing out the contours of this new answer to old questions of IR in further detail, we now turn to the genealogies of ‘translation’ and start tracing the conceptual insights that they harbour.

Theories of translation

Cultural Studies and the change of meaning

Two developments have propelled the increasing prominence of the concept of ‘translation’ as an analytical category deemed suitable for the inquiry into social,

political and cultural processes. On the one hand, Translation Studies have moved beyond the exclusive focus on linguistic translations and increasingly placed texts in context. Paying ever more attention to the ways in which the meaning of texts is socially embedded, translation scholars have thus moved the field into steady dialogues with adjacent disciplines (Bachmann-Medick 2009). These moves were far from isolated from broader political developments. In Europe, the end of the Cold War invariably changed the nature of Translation Studies. As Mary Snell-Hornby recalls in a beautiful and quite moving moment of personal recollection, the ways in which the fall of the Iron Curtain changed the ways in which translators thought about translation was particularly noticeable in Vienna, ‘the onetime imperial city which for four decades had occupied a remote position on the most easterly tip of Western Europe, and now found itself, geographically at least, in the centre again’ (Snell-Hornby 2006, 69). Relocated through massive shifts in global power relations to the centre of Europe, Vienna became the nodal point where not only people, goods and ideas but also languages moved back and forth between Eastern and Western Europe, the demand for people with a proficiency in languages spoken on both sides of the Iron Curtain accelerated, and Translation Studies flourished. A Translation Studies congress took place in 1992 and several so-called ‘Vienna Translation Summits’ followed, the European Society for Translation Studies was founded and, as Snell-Hornby recalls:

All in all, it was a favourable climate for the development of Translation Studies. After the paralyzing effects of the Cold War it was a time of dialogue, of rediscovering the value of human contacts, on the personal level, but also internationally, in trade and industry, in culture and politics.
(Snell-Hornby 2006, 69)

Not only translations but also translators are thus located in very specific social and political contexts and unavoidably exposed to the changes, ruptures and upheavals that these contexts undergo. This lived experience of translations and translators in context also marked its imprint on the field of Translations Studies as it moved towards increasing intellectual exchanges with Gender and Postcolonial Studies as well as the Social Sciences and Humanities.

On the other hand, as scholars within Translation Studies placed texts ever more firmly in context, the linguistic turn in the Social Sciences and Humanities led to an increasing attention to the linguistic mediation of the social world (Philp 2008). Intertwined with an overall critique of representation – popularized, for example, in Anthropology through the writing culture debate – translation is understood here as an inherently political process. Thus, James Clifford argued in the introduction to *Writing Culture* that “translations” of culture, however subtle or inventive in textual form, take place within relations of “weak” and “strong” languages that govern the international flow of knowledge’ (Clifford 2011, 22). Rather than conceptualizing translation as the safe transfer of meaning from one language to another, it becomes primarily perceived in terms of ruptures and

discontinuities. In line with the aforementioned critique of representation, the reconceptualization of translation in terms of ruptures starts from a rejection of uncontested originals.

Central to this claim is the work of Walter Benjamin. In his famous essay on 'The Task of the Translator', Benjamin (1977) distinguished between two kinds of translation: on the one hand, there is the classical idea of translational fidelity, which implies an aspiration of translations to approximate whatever has been defined as the original as closely as possible in the translation; and on the other hand, Benjamin highlights the productive possibilities of translational discontinuities. This understanding dares to break with the imperative of translational fidelity, whereby it challenges the hierarchy between the original and its translation and instead reconceptualizes a good translation as the re-creating of meaning within the bounds of the receiving language. Here, every translation becomes a new original in its own right. Moreover, for Benjamin, it is the creation of these new originals that is the task of the translator. As he argues:

The translation . . . does not live within the dense forest of its own native language; instead, from the outside and without entering it, the translation calls the original into this forest, precisely at that point where the echo of its own language allows for the reverberation of the foreign language's original.
(Benjamin 1977, 66, translation T.B.)

Therefore, the translation does not simply reproduce the meaning of the original. Nonetheless, at the same time it is also not fully independent of the original. As Benjamin argues, the original remains a reference point for the translation by invoking the image of a tangent that touches a circle:

Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point – establishing, with this touch rather than with the point, the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity – a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux.

(Benjamin 1996, 261)

As Lena Foljanty (2015, 9–10) has argued in her analysis of the passage quoted above, it is *the moment of touching* that is decisive for Benjamin. In this moment, the translating language grasps a glimpse of other meanings, of something that is inexpressible within one's own language. Making the inexpressible visible in turn forces the translator to initiate a complex process of innovation that ultimately results in the creation of something new, something that is related to yet not identical with the original.

Benjamin's congenial complication of the relationship between translation and original has been taken up more recently by anthropologists, who have added detailed attention to relationships of power and domination that accompany

processes of translation (Rottenburg 2009). Thus, taking Benjamin's argument one step further, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing has argued that in processes of translation, 'there are no originals, but only a heterogeneous continuum of translations, a continual process of rewriting in which meaning – as well as claims of originality and purity – are made' (Tsing 1997, 253). Claims to originality and purity do not enjoy a privileged epistemological status but are – in Tsing's account – modes of power. These modes of power have also been at the centre of postcolonial scholarship and their engagement with the politics of translation.

Postcolonial scholarship: adding power to translation

It is no coincidence that it was Vienna rather than – say – Bratislava that enjoyed a brief stint as the translational capital of Europe in the 1990s. Colonial expansion and the 'politics of translation' (Spivak 2009) have historically been deeply intertwined and over the past two decades translation has been a key concept of postcolonial scholarship. This scholarship has been primarily concerned with questions of empire and imperialism and thus, of course, also with important aspects of world politics (which, ironically, are often treated only marginally in IR). Again, there are at least two distinct lines of this critique, the first of which focuses on the epistemic violence inflicted by processes of translation, in which indigenous epistemologies are forced into colonial regimes of knowledge (de Sousa Santos 2012). Ashis Nandy has famously analysed such violent processes as the 'imperialism of the categories': through colonial translations, 'Intellect and intelligence become IQ, the oral cultures become the cultures of the primitive, the oppressed become the proletariat, social change becomes development' (Nandy 1999, 321). In turn, these translations have highly tangible impacts on colonial and postcolonial contexts. Take the concept of secularism and its correlative understandings of religion as an example. Nandy argues that the translation of pre-colonial practices of religious tolerance into colonial and postcolonial regimes of secular statecraft have not tamed but actually accelerated religious conflict, including its most violent manifestations. The basis for this argument is a distinction between religion-as-faith and religion-as-ideology. Whereas the former is inherently plural and refers to religion as an experienced reality of everyday practice, the latter becomes an exclusionary political identity, in which religious affiliation is not defined through everyday practice but rather dogmatic identification with a sacred text. This latter notion of religion in turn is strongly modelled on (specific understandings of) Christianity; indeed, it was this rather specific understanding of religion that informed the colonial state in South Asia.

Through the colonial state, this specific conceptualization of religion as adherence to a sacred text or texts became institutionalized; for example, through the colonial legal system. Initially, the colonial administrators of the British India Company sought to govern through the structures of the pre-colonial political system, including its legal architecture. Nonetheless, this already involved complex translations. Distrusting the plurality of the legal interpretations that

they encountered in the local courts, the colonial administration eventually decided to: (a) produce English translations of what they considered authoritative legal texts; and (b) have these texts used by British judges to supervise their Indian counterparts (Anderson 1993; Giunchi 2010). As seemingly native laws were increasingly replaced by secular colonial law codes through the nineteenth century, by 1875 only the family laws remained governed through religious laws (this custom persists to date in the postcolonial states succeeding British India). As Hindu family law applied to Hindus, Muslim family Law to Muslims, etc., religious identities thus became enshrined in law. They were also central categories through which the colonial state enumerated its subjects (through censuses) and mapped its distributions, thereby producing unprecedented notions of minority and majority populations (Kaviraj 2010). The plurality of pre-colonial religious practices was lost in its translations into the administrative categories of the colonial and – as Nandy highlights – postcolonial state.

One postcolonial line of argument thus highlights the violence inherent in these translations of specific practices into the ethnocentric categories of Orientalist discourses. Yet these translations are never absolute: regardless of the gross disparities of power in which these translations unfold, the colonial hardly ever succeeds in fully displacing that which is being colonized. Another post-colonial line of argument thus emphasizes the agency inherent in two-way processes of translation. This line of argument shows how in the interactions between colonizers and colonized, both invariably changed, so these changes can be written as translational histories. Homi Bhabha offers such a history in his analysis of *The Location of Culture*. Writing against the essentialism of identity categories and their binary construction, Bhabha quotes the testimony of African-American artist Renée Green on one of her installations at the Institute of Contemporary Art in New York. Green recalls how she deliberately used the architecture of the installation venue – and especially the staircases as a space in-between – to disrupt neat representations of difference. Bhabha thinks of this staircase as a ‘third space’, a space where identities meet without ‘settling into primordial polarities’ (Bhabha 2004, 5). Instead of hardened polarities, Bhabha emphasizes hybridity as the outcome of ceaseless processes of translation. It is in these ceaseless processes that agency – and in particular postcolonial agency – is located. Translations break with solidified patterns of identification and become the way in which minority communities negotiate their collective identities. For Bhabha, translation is thus ‘[h]ow newness enters the world’ (Bhabha 2004, 303).

Whereas Bhabha develops an explicitly postmodern approach to questions of agency and translation, Dipesh Chakrabarty does (equally explicitly) not do so. Nonetheless, postcolonial agency also plays a significant role in his analysis of the complex interaction between what he calls ‘the universal concepts of political modernity’ and specific colonial and postcolonial contexts. As he argues, ‘[t]he universal concepts of political modernity encounter pre-existing concepts, categories, institutions, and practices through which they get translated and configured differently’ (Chakrabarty 2008, xii). However, these different configurations have largely escaped social scientific analysis. Rather than attending to

these differences, scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Chakrabarty is particularly concerned with history and sociology) are engaged in a second process of translation, whereby they translate the complex diversity of social phenomena in different postcolonial contexts – i.e. the outcomes of the first process of translation – into the universality of social scientific analysis. This is the kind of imperialism of the categories that Nandy has also criticized. Nonetheless, for Chakrabarty, these categories are both inescapable and unavoidable: inescapable because they have been globalized in the processes of colonial expansion; and unavoidable because they are the only language in which the power of bureaucratic machineries can be contested. As he argues: ‘One cannot argue with modern bureaucracies and other instruments of governmentality without recourse to the secular time and narratives of history and sociology. The subaltern classes need this knowledge in order to fight their battles for social justice’ (Chakrabarty 2008, 86). Rather than deconstructing the conceptual languages of the Social Sciences and Humanities, Chakrabarty thus proposes to provincialize them. Provincializing Europe thus means showing ‘how universalistic thought was always and already modified by particular histories, whether or not we could excavate such pasts fully’ (Chakrabarty 2008, xiv).

Provincializing Europe then also opens the space for what Chakrabarty calls cross-categorical translations. In contrast to translations through a third language – for example, when the English ‘water’ and the Bengali ‘pani’ are translated through the seemingly neutral and universal language of its natural scientific description as H_2O – cross-categorical translations are more like a barter (Chakrabarty 2008, 73). Rather than moving one language to another through the mediation of a universal third, in cross-categorical translations two languages meet and negotiate new meanings, term for term. However, this move towards cross-categorical translation does not presuppose the deconstruction of key categories of the Social Sciences, like ‘the state’, ‘secularism’ or ‘the marked’; instead, it suggests breaking with Europe’s past and present monopoly over the legitimate interpretation of the meaning of these terms. Breaking with this monopoly in turn opens the space for difference.

In its postcolonial variation, processes of translation can thus be both emancipatory and oppressive. This ambivalence points to the deep imbrication of any translation within existing power structures. Translations can foster a relationship of domination (as in the case of the imperialism of the categories, which eradicates difference), as well as challenging the powers that be (for example, when cross-categorical translations challenge bogus universals and thereby allow difference to flourish). This intimate connection between power and translation, the ways in which it works through categorizations, its complex relationship to difference and the emancipatory potential that it harbours are key insights of postcolonial scholarship for the investigation of world politics in translation. Whereas postcolonial scholarship is directly concerned with questions of empire – and thus holds immediate relevance to world politics – Science and Technology Studies are primarily concerned with the relationality of human and non-human agency.

Science and Technology Studies: forging relations

In the early 1980s, Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law wrote a series of empirical essays in which they outlined elements of a sociology of translation (Callon and Latour 1981; Callon 1986; Law 1986). A key move in this body of work is to open up the category of the 'actor' to introduce non-humans in the form of other species, material entities, norms and knowledge next to humans in the analysis of a phenomenon. The different kind of actors (humans and non-humans) are understood to be ontologically symmetrical. As Freeman (2009, 435) highlights, 'individuals and technologies are treated as a single unit of analysis (an actor-network), and translation refers to the way in which such entities are formed'.

A particularly good example of this is the seminal study by Michel Callon (1986), in which the point of departure is the declining scallop population in St Brieuc Bay. In Callon's case study, three scientists return from a trip to Japan where they have learnt about an innovative cultivation technique for revitalizing the scallop population. Could the same technique work in France? Rather than being interested in how this cultivation technique travels, Callon focuses on enactment, namely the ways in which the scientists create an actor-network aimed at increasing the stock of scallops in St Bruieuc Bay. The scientists involve a whole series of actors, namely: (a) their scientific colleagues; (b) the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay; and (c) the scallops in their various stages. These actor groups are brought into an actor-network through a number of translations. The mechanism of translation in this account is short for displacing the three different groups and their identities and interests.

The scallops are transformed into larvae, the larvae into numbers, the numbers into tables and curves which represent easily transportable, reproducible, and diffusible sheets of paper . . . The scallops have been displaced. They have been transported into the conference room through a series of transformations.

(Callon 1986, 217–18)

The scientists express in their own words what the actor groups say and want, thus establishing themselves as spokespersons. This practice brings the three groups – which were previously separated – into a relationship or network with one another. They speak in unison as long as the scientists and the other actors (including the scallops) are successful in a collaborative performance. In other words, this set of practices allows the three scientists to establish an 'obligatory passage point' through which all the actors have to pass. Translation is a process that unites the many into the one. Dispersed interests and identities are reconfigured centring on a problem (for instance, the declining scallop population).

What is striking in Callon's piece is the explicit focus on what has been labelled as inscriptions and inscription devices. They include physical artefacts, pieces of paper, graphs, computer programs, etc., and are central in translating the messiness

of the world into usable, mobile knowledge (Best and Walters 2013). For example, Bruno Latour (1999) follows an interdisciplinary team of scientists in the Amazon, examining their scientific practices of evaluating the quality of a forest. Latour does not rush through the details of scientific practices but allows the reader to experience all of the intermediate steps that are performed between the Amazonian forest and the final report that elaborates on the forest. From their specific disciplinary perspectives, the scientists discuss the objects that they want to research, establish a research field in the forest, take soil samples and categorize the pieces of soil into an ordered system and finally into diagrams. In doing so, they rely on inscription devices as diverse as spades, plastic bags and pens and they draw on their scientific knowledge and the research practices that they have learned in their studies. The piece of forest is turned into a scientific object, or – as Latour calls it – an inscription. While the Amazonian forest does not travel, inscriptions do.

Thinking of translation as a process rather than a result opens up the space to take seriously the non-humans that are part of the formation of a scientific or political object. Objects are brought into being by forging relations between actors, norms, knowledge and materials that are otherwise different. To underline the translational and boundary-crossing work, Star and Griesemer (1989) speak of boundary objects that are constituted when actors with different kinds of expertise cooperate. Boundary objects may link science and politics (Borie and Hulme 2015, see also Chapter 11 this volume) or the religious and the secular (Chapter 10 this volume).

Taken together, theories of translation as they have emerged from Cultural and Postcolonial Studies as well as STS do not move easily across disciplines. Our conceptualization of translation deliberately escapes canonical theorizations. As Clarke et al. have persuasively argued regarding policy translation, its aim is ‘not to attempt to create a new “school” ready to be named, abbreviated and canonised’ (Clarke et al. 2015, 35; see Best and Walters 2013; Law 2009); instead, theories of translation need to be reconfigured, transformed, thought anew and made relevant when entering the field of politics and IR (Barry 2013).

International Relations in translation

We suggest conceptualizing the emergent discussion on translation¹ in IR by thinking of two movements: a movement *from one to many*; and a movement *from many to one*.

From one to many

The movement from one to many refers to the change of meaning that occurs when objects travel. Such travelling objects include policies, norms and organizational templates that proliferate through what sociological institutionalists have called world cultural models (Meyer et al. 1997). These cultural models – and not functional necessities – lead to the increasing homogenization of

administrative structures as well as educational, medical, scientific and family law institutions, school curricula and census models. However, the adaptation of these models does not automatically lead to their realization in practice; instead, Meyer et al. argue that intuitional templates are decoupled from social realities and thus remain largely ineffectual. However, the generic notion of decoupling fails to account for the significant variation that persists in the ways in which global cultural models induce changed social and political practices in some contexts but not in others. Turning to this variation, constructive IR scholars have pointed to the importance of local agency for the realization of global norms in practice by developing 'boomerang' and 'spiral' models of norm diffusion (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999).

Despite having developed increasingly dynamic models of the ways in which norms travel from one place to another, IR scholars have treated the content of norms as something rather stable and immutable (Krook and True 2012). Attacking these assumptions of stability, Amitav Acharya (2004) has argued that local elites consciously change the meaning of global norms. They graft and modify external ideas in congruence with the 'normative priors', whereby they 'localize' these ideas and make them fit with normative preconceptions already existing within the receiving context. Nonetheless, if transnational norms are simply made congruent with the political agenda of local elites, what transformative power do they retain (if any)? Reconciling a nuanced understanding of the complex changes in the content of norms that occur as they travel from one place to another with a detailed account of how these norms nonetheless affect receiving contexts remains a challenge: a challenge into which – as we argue – the concept of translation provides important insights.

Some of these insights have been developed in the analysis of the translation of human rights. For example, Susanne Zwingel (2016) and Sally Merry (2006) have shown how the translation of women's rights into a multiplicity of programmes, policy interventions and advocacy campaigns has successfully furthered the rights enshrined in the Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) around the world. Turning from human rights to the analysis of the rule of law, Lisbeth Zimmermann (forthcoming) has further shown how less precisely defined norms are more translatable. Focusing on the translation of global norms in Guatemala, she shows how the specificity and formality of international norms conditions the leeway for their translation into domestic law. In addition to the domestic laws of the state, non-state justice institutions also play a crucial role in the translation of global norms in local courts, as Tobias Berger shows. Focusing on large-scale donor interventions in such non-state courts in Bangladesh, he shows how two kinds of change occur in the processes of translation. On the one hand, he shows how the grass-roots level fieldworkers succeed in supporting the empowerment of poor and marginalized people and thereby alter the existing power dynamics in rural Bangladesh. Yet, on the other hand, they do so only because they also change transnational norms by translating them in ways that resonate within the social and political world that they inhabit (Berger 2017).

From many to one

The second movement that we attend to is the movement from many to one. We argue that there is emerging literature on international institutions, which – drawing on translation approaches as developed in STS – examines the processes of (seeming) consensualization within international institutions. For example, Christian Bueger (2015) has turned to analysing those ‘epistemic infrastructures’ through which knowledge about piracy as a phenomenon of global political relevance is produced and enacted (Bueger 2015). Focusing on the reports by the International Maritime Organization, he argues that these ‘reports are thus at the end of a long translation chain, reducing the complexity of a piracy attack and codifying it’ (Bueger 2015, 11). These translation processes render piracy knowledgeable as an object of world politics; indeed, it is the knowledge on which the United Nations Security Council bases its resolution. Thus, this movement from many to one is a movement inquiring into the various entities such as, in the case of piracy, piratical activity, ship masters, ship owners, flag states, normative frameworks, etc. Connecting these entities (the many) and forging them into a single document (the one) is a powerful translational practice.

Changing the policy field from piracy to climate, Bentley Allan (2017) – also drawing on translation – argues for understanding the current framing of the climate as a process of object constitution. In contingent interactions, political and scientific actors shape the form and content of global governance objects to govern them through international institutions. The move from many to one is essential here since there are ‘competing, contested representations of the climate in the scientific literature and a variety of ways to translate them into governance arrangements’ (Allan 2017, 131). Objects do not simply exist in the world but require continuous translational work and indeed power to be stabilized and represented in international institutions.

If we want to know how international institutions know the world in its complexity and eventually act upon them, we need to inquire how the phenomena that they seek to govern become translated into their administrative structures (Best 2012). Focusing on a newly founded international expert organization on biodiversity, Maud Borie and Mike Hulme (2015) have carefully traced the translations of competing conceptualizations of the relationship between humans and nature were reconciled in the conceptual framework of this organization. The one framework is crucial for understanding how the many views on biodiversity will be researched and potentially governed in the future. Thus, the emerging literature in IR on the move from many to one deals with the mechanisms and processes whereby objects or phenomena become constituted and rendered knowledgeable in the processes of translation. In undertaking this translational work, actors progressively characterize – and thereby stabilize – environmental objects like the climate (Allan 2017) or forests (Esguerra 2014), as well as financial markets (Porter 2013).

Contributions of this volume

In this volume, we seek to move beyond these first inroads that translation scholarship has made into IR. While the translation perspective has contributed important insights into the ways in which the meaning of norms change as they move back and forth between different places, similar transformations have remained unexplored when it comes to other travelling objects. These objects are at the centre of this book, including tangibly material objects such as medical instruments (Chapter 4 this volume) as well as more abstract things such as concepts (Chapters 2 and 3 this volume), projects (Chapters 8 and 9 this volume) or entire stories (Chapter 6 this volume).

Regarding these objects of translation, we make three overarching points. First, we argue that these objects always have a material component, which has been largely neglected by existing scholarship in IR. Even seemingly non-material objects such as norms of rule of law (Chapter 5 this volume) or knowledge about a specific phenomenon of world politics such as piracy (Bueger 2015), the climate (Allan 2017) or forests (Esguerra 2014) require the mediation of material artefacts. Without documents, cables, hard and software information cannot be transmitted (Chapter 11 this volume), without files, they cannot be stored and without a physical infrastructure, they cannot be presented to others. Second, while most IR scholarship orders objects along the question of what to govern (the climate, terrorism, public health), we add to this those objects concerned with the *doing of politics*. By this, we mean the instruments, projects or concepts through which the policy issues mentioned above are structured and governed. These objects subsequently contribute to the question of how ‘governing is done’ (Voss and Freeman 2016; see also Rottenburg 2009).

Third, these objects do have not any inherent stability: they are not fixed entities simply existing in the world, but rather ‘objects in becoming’. One of the key insights of investigating world politics in translation is thus the cautious awareness to the myriad ways in which seemingly self-evident entities are actually brought into being, as well as the arduous work that this requires. Neither pirates nor forests simply exist in the world and can subsequently be governed; instead, they are only stabilized as objects that can be known through multiple acts of translation (Chapters 3 and 6 this volume) and it is such acts of translation that this volume brings into focus.

The translation of objects does not occur between different levels but rather between different actors located in different contexts. Whereas IR is characterized by a spatial imagination that distinguishes between international and national or local levels, the translation perspective as it is advanced in this volume focuses on translations between different sites. This is more than a difference in terminology. The notion of ‘levels’ in IR designates a hierarchically structured space in which the international claims superiority vis-à-vis the local. Especially regarding contexts in the Global South, ‘the international’ is constructed as a space of moral and technological superiority contrasted with ‘the local’, which is regularly portrayed as the primary obstacle to the realization of universal rights as well as

the principal culprit for economic stagnation and widespread poverty (Merry 2006; Rao 2010; Chapters 4 and 5 this volume). By contrast, the concept of ‘sites’ imposes a radical degree of spatial symmetry. Borrowed explicitly from practice theory (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina and von Savigny 2001), the notion of ‘sites’ flattens the hierarchically structured spatial imagination of IR and opens the space to look at translations as they occur within specific places (Chapters 2 and 3 this volume)

Investigating translations *in situ* is a methodological challenge, which requires following the objects of translation to previously neglected places in which world politics happens. These places might include the trading floors of global financial markets (Porter 2013), the streets of Lisbon, where transnational drug prevention programmes play out (Chapter 2 this volume) or the corridors of Ugandan hospitals, where medical technologies are translated in unexpected ways (Chapter 4 this volume). Capturing these unexpected ways in which objects are both constituted in the processes of translation and changed as they are again translated differently by different people in different places is only possible through the microscopic analysis of translations as they unfold (Chapter 6 this volume). As the chapters in this volume demonstrate, investigating world politics in translation not only pays acute attention to previously neglected objects, and offers new insights into how these objects are constituted and how they change as they travel, but it also leads researchers to find world politics in unexpected places. We now turn to these places by reviewing the individual contributions to this volume.

Concepts

Our first pair of objects follows the travel of concepts in the realm of international drug politics. In Chapter 2 *Endre Dányi* attends to the crucial question of what happens to the sociology of translation or what has become known as Actor-Network Theory (ANT) itself when it is made to travel to the realm of politics. His chapter remains faithful to the spirit of ANT and engages with this issue empirically. Based on ethnographic fieldwork that he conducted in Lisbon in 2015, he shows how three key works by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and Annemarie Mol – indicating three key episodes in the development of ANT – can be put to use in the realm of drug policy. Having followed ANT into three distinct sites empirically, he argues that the strength of ANT in studying politics does not lie in the avoidance of bad translation, but rather the ongoing exploration of what may count as good treason.

Whereas Dányi’s concept crosses the boundary from science to politics, *Holger Stitzel* concentrates on the journey of the concept of ‘organized crime’ across time and space in Chapter 3. Stitzel finds that the content of the concept of organized crime has shifted its meaning in the political discourse multiple times, from being an issue of little concern to being considered a key security threat facing states and societies worldwide. While Stitzel claims the increased securitization of organized crime, he also concludes that this does not remain uncontested. Amitav Acharya (2011) has developed the notion of ‘norm subsidiarity’ as the process whereby

local actors create rules with a view to preserving their autonomy. Similarly, Stritzel sheds light on the agency of Third World countries which increasingly develop new norms towards narcotics activities.

Instruments

The chapters on instruments are exemplary of the turn towards materiality that a translational approach provides. They are concerned with the ways in which development cooperation plays out in the field of global health governance (Chapter 4) as well as rule of law promotion (Chapter 5). Based on several weeks of ethnographic fieldwork, they examine the concrete instruments through which cooperation is meant to be achieved. In Chapter 4 *Arlena Liggins* and *Uli Beisel* examine a disease that has long been perceived as a disease of the wealthy, namely diabetes. Their chapter subsequently focuses on a technological instrument – a glucometer – the first-choice technology when it comes to testing and diagnosing diabetes in Uganda. Liggins and Beisel show how a medical technology such as the glucometer can be translated and adapted in a setting like Uganda. Despite being a setting for which it was not initially designed and produced, it often offers the only chance and possibility of detecting and diagnosing diabetes, especially in governmental health care facilities. Liggins and Beisel argue that using and/or owning a glucometer in Uganda might not fulfil the assumptions made by designers and producers of the glucometer. Rather than facilitating the life of a diabetes patient, the new instrument might cause confusion and – in some cases – make life even harder. Thus, looking through the conceptual lens of translation, they challenge more conventional notions of technology transfer and social engineering but also relate these processes to aspects of (un)changing institutions and broader questions of social (dis)order.

In Chapter 5 *Katrin Seidel* examines rule of law promotion in South Sudan. Her chapter shows how global governance institutions and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) experimenting in South Sudan's constitution-making have brought in their toolboxes. Rather than following abstract norms, Seidel examines the instruments, i.e. modules, guidelines, 'good/best practices' and 'project law' techniques for the establishment of rule of law. She shows how dominant national actors manage to use these instruments for their own purposes. What local actors accept, adopt and appropriate from the international tools, she argues, much depends on the question of whether the offers strengthen their own position. Thus, in the case of South Sudan, powerful local actors managed to translate international instruments in ways congenial to their own power interests.

Facts

With facts as travelling objects, we attend to the current debate or self-blame of some constructivist scholars who have become silent on the social construction of world politics fearing that their insights might be used politically. More than

ever, we believe that critical scholarship should stress that facts are not simply out there but rather produced. This claim will not run into the misunderstood thesis of ‘anything goes’ if we continue examining the making of facts empirically based on the art of interpretative scientific inquiry. How is it possible that some knowledge claims become authoritative and others remain in the dark? Chapter 6 is a prime example of such an exercise in IR. *Sebastian Schindler* investigates how a specific story of delaying an aid request came to confirm what is wrong with the United Nations (UN). Rather than challenging putative facts, Schindler argues that prominent analysis of the UN have taken them as given. The uncritical treatment of the facts in the analysis is not merely an accidental oversight; rather, it is part and parcel of an important problem from which the UN suffers tremendously. According to Schindler, this problem is the widely used assumption that all actors in the UN – whether states, agencies or individuals – only pursue their self-interests. This assumption is problematic because it is complicit in the production of the world that it pretends to explain.

Farhad Mukhtarov reminds us in his reflexive chapter (Chapter 7) that while conceptual and empirical studies of translation processes are key to exploring the power of a translational approach for IR, the discussion of the methodologies used in such an inquiry is equally important: in other words, to explicate the ways in which we come to know the objects we study. Reflecting on his own ethnographic research on the translation of water policies in southeastern Turkey, Mukhtarov discusses the ethical and political dilemmas pertaining to ethnographic research on the processes of policy translation. These include the danger of becoming entangled in a web of relationships with powerful actors and the potentially ensuing self-censorship to report on them, the need to compromise initial research designs to obtain access to data and the difficulty of balancing the roles of researcher, advocate and confidante. To address these challenges and dilemmas, Mukhtarov proposes various strategies evolving around the reflexivity, positionality and normativity of the researcher.

Projects

Projects mobilize people, materials and organizations, albeit in relation to each other, as *Richard Freeman* notes in Chapter 8. Both his chapter and that of *Noemi Lendvai-Bainton* are concerned with the European project. However, what does taking the European project seriously mean? *Richard Freeman*’s chapter begins on the ground, in the everyday understanding of the project as an organizational form. *Freeman* argues for thinking of the project as an assemblage and he identifies the dynamics of the assemblage in the processes of translation that it realizes and by which it is realized. Using European Commission initiatives in mental health and their relations to the WHO as an example, he explores how policy is made in projects. *Freeman* argues that for the critical factors in a project’s evolution, success and failure are the degree of alignment between different elements – the strength and kind of relationality – that the project achieves.

The specific kind of relationality is also at the heart of Chapter 9. *Noemi Lendvai-Bainton* approaches the EU integration project focusing on 'EU English': a language that is constructed in particular ways to promote and sustain the European integration project based on highly technicalized, non-politicized, evidence-based policy language that assumes consensus and collaboration. Lendvai-Bainton argues against the scholarship on ideational and discursive Europeanization, which assumes that ideas and discourses will inevitably lead to the 'common' and consolidate 'shared ideas' into particular institutional forms. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Hungary, she finds that beneath the surface both the policy process and the associated institutionalization remain uncertain, fragmented, contradictory and multiple. Thus, she demonstrates how a translation perspective can explain the current crisis of the EU given the assumed consensus on the 'common values, norms and visions', which has been reinforced and reproduced by both policy discourses within the EU circuits as well as academic discourses.

Expertise

The final two chapters deal with the processes of translation in producing and negotiating expertise. While much of the work in IR has focused on consensual knowledge for policy (Haas 1992), both chapters substantially open up the debate on knowledge. In Chapter 10 *Katharina Glaab* enters climate change negotiations with a focus on faith-based actors. While natural science and economic issues usually play a crucial role in climate change negotiations, faith-based actors have stressed the morality of climate change as an important factor in finding a legally binding agreement to avert climate change. Glaab investigates how faith-based actors translate their knowledge within the 'secularized' space of global climate change negotiations and delineates the ambiguous ways in which the translation processes are executed. She specifically examines two cases of secular/religious translation: Glaab finds that the papal encyclical on the environment operates as a boundary object relating the secular and the scientific on the one hand and the ethical and religious on the other. Regarding the negotiations in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), she argues that the faith-based actors translate their convictions and knowledge through both the imitation and differentiation of secularized international negotiation practices.

Rebecca-Lea Korinek compares food safety agencies in Germany and the UK in Chapter 11. Her focus is on the 'guidance documents' that food safety agencies employ to select, order and homogenize heterogeneous conceptual elements of discourses on risk governance. These elements became salient and contested in the wake of the BSE crisis and other public controversies. Thus, documents are one of the main translation tools to cultivate what she calls politico-epistemic authority in the risk assessment discourse. However, she finds that these documents work differently in Germany and the UK. In the UK, the strategy is about authorizing ways of knowledge production with a strong emphasis on accountability to domestic stakeholders. By contrast, Germany pursues quite a different strategy, predominantly based on translating context-specific ways of knowledge

production as universal standards and emphasizing the very detailed standards of knowledge production and communication as a proof of scientific validity and objectivity. Korinek argues that the difference between Germany and the UK can be explained by the ‘civic epistemology’ specific to each country, which structures translational practices of certifying and validating local ways of knowing risks.

The conclusion of this volume answers the three questions we have posed at the beginning of this chapter: (1) What makes objects move? (2) What do they do while moving? (3) What happens to them as they move from one place to another? These three questions have helped us to conceptualize world politics in translation: the answers that we provide are: (a) power; (b) relationality; and (c) difference. Making objects move requires power and – more specifically – the power to represent objects in different places. As objects move, they bind people, materials and things together. Therefore, relationality is a key outcome of translational processes, as is the production of difference that occurs as objects move from one place to another. The conclusion revisits all the chapters in this volume regarding power, relationality and difference, arguing that these are the constitutive features of translations. Before elaborating on these features in greater detail in the concluding chapter, the analysis of world politics in translation has to start on the ground with the meticulous investigation of empirical cases.

Note

- 1 While Organization Studies took up insights from STS relatively early to conceptualize organizational change and travel of organizations (see, for instance, Czarniawska and Sevón 1996; Drori et al. 2013), it was mainly Policy Studies that began exploring what it means to think of policy as being in translation (Freeman 2009; Clarke et al. 2015).

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2 Good treason

Following Actor-Network Theory to the realm of drug policy

Endre Dányi

Introduction

One source of inspiration for this volume is Actor-Network Theory (ANT) – a particular social scientific approach that in its early version was called ‘sociology of translation’. To use the key terms of Tobias Berger and Alejandro Esguerra’s introduction (Chapter 1 this volume), ANT’s particularity can be captured by the following statements: (1) *power* is understood as a relational effect, rather than something that can be possessed; (2) *relations* may exist among all kinds of entities, humans and nonhumans alike; and (3) the *differences* that appear as patterns of relations are never absolute, and therefore cannot be easily described as attributes of micro or macro phenomena. Just how radical these statements were within the social sciences in the 1980s and 1990s has been widely discussed in the secondary literature on ANT (see, for example, Michael 2016 for a recent overview). In the early 2000s, there were considerable efforts to make a case for ANT’s usefulness in studying politics, especially regarding the conditions of public participation (Marres 2012), the working mechanisms of the modern state (Passoth and Rowland 2010) and the basic terms and categories of international relations (Barry 2013). However, it has rarely been discussed what happens to ANT itself when it is made to travel to the realm of politics.

This chapter tries to stay faithful to the spirit of ANT and engage with the above question *empirically*. More precisely, based on ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in Lisbon in 2015, it shows how three key works – indicating three key episodes in the development of ANT – can be put to use in the realm of drug policy. The structure of the chapter is as follows: drawing on Michel Callon’s classical study of scallop-farming, the first empirical story demonstrates the usefulness of the sociology of translation when it is applied to the problematisation of drug use in Europe. Then, centred on Bruno Latour’s introductory text, *Reassembling the Social*, the second empirical story shows how ANT refigures drug use as a *social* problem. Following Annemarie Mol’s work on care, the third empirical story highlights different ways of engaging with drug use, only some of which operate in terms of problem-solving. The final part of the chapter discusses the three processes together and argues for a shift in ANT-inspired thinking about politics – a shift from a concern with bad translation to good treason.

Sociology of translation and the problems of Europe

Most overviews about ANT name Michel Callon's 'Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay' as the foundational English language text (Callon 1986 – see Latour 2005; Law 2009; Michael 2016; Mol 2010). Published 30 years ago, Callon's paper defined the sociology of translation as a detailed study of the formation and transformation of various 'actor-networks', that is, entities that could be simultaneously conceptualised as individual and collective (see also Chapter 11 this volume).

Drawing on his fieldwork in Brittany in the 1970s, in the central part of the study Callon identified four interlinked moments in the formation and transformation of such actor-networks, namely problematisation, interessement, enrolment and mobilisation. The first moment suggested that if we were to understand how certain phenomena became framed as problems, we should not decide in advance who or what may count as a relevant actor. Following a semiotic sensitivity, we should rather let the actors define themselves and each other, be they human (such as scientists and fishermen) or nonhuman (scallops, for instance). This radical symmetry between humans and nonhumans was also maintained in the second and the third moments, where some configurations of actors became stabilised, thanks to the use of different kinds of devices, some of which were material (like towlines) while others were immaterial (verbal agreements). Finally, the fourth moment engaged with what the social sciences often refer to as the micro-macro divide. By closely examining how a particular set of connections among particular actors was developed and stabilised over a particular period of time, Callon did not want to avoid generalisation. He was instead interested in how actor-networks could extend themselves, shrink or fall apart, depending on how successful the mobilisation of both humans and nonhumans had been along the way.

Soon after the publication of Callon's paper, these four terms – problematisation, interessement, enrolment and mobilisation – became central to the vocabulary of ANT. Initially, the appeal of this vocabulary lay in the usage of an explicitly political language to describe seemingly technical phenomena. That the translation also worked the other way round was elegantly demonstrated more than a decade later by Andrew Barry, in a collection of essays titled *Political Machines* (2001). The empirical cases discussed by Barry, which ranged from anti-road protests, to the monitoring of air quality, to the shaping of political subjects in interactive exhibitions, implied that while in the Cold War era the task of ANT scholars was to highlight how technological projects had been caught up in politics, after the fall of the Berlin Wall the challenge became to show how abstract political concepts, such as 'Europe', were being expressed in technological terms. This, in Barry's work, was not an argument for technocracy, that is, the replacement of politics by a technical rationality. On the contrary, it was an attempt to stay close to politics, which in the 1990s and early 2000s had gradually become organised around complex techno-scientific problems. If Europe wanted to constitute itself as a political entity, Callon later suggested in an extensive

review of Barry's book, it had to envision itself as a space within which technology and politics could become articulable to one another (Callon 2004, 132).

I remembered this idea when I arrived in Lisbon in the middle of September 2015. As an ethnographer interested in the politics of problem formation, the main purpose of my visit was to attend an international conference on drug use, organised by the journal *Contemporary Drug Problems* (CDP). Most sessions of the conference were held at a European Union (EU) agency, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), which has its headquarters in Lisbon, on the north bank of the River Tagus, quite appropriately in a square named after Europe. Could this be (part of) the space Callon had in mind? I had a few days before the start of the conference, so I thought I would spend some time examining what the EMCDDA looked like from a 'sociology of translation' perspective.

Before travelling to Lisbon, I had already looked at the EMCDDA's website. The analysis of the extent to which the online and downloadable texts, many of which are available in 24 languages, already perform a certain version of politics is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Chapter 9 this volume for a compelling study of translation as harmonisation). What is crucial to highlight for my purpose is the EMCDDA's framing of drug use as a *problem*. According to the first sentence of the online Mission Statement, '[i]llicit drug use and trafficking are worldwide phenomena that threaten health and social stability'. Using Callon's notion of problematisation, this framing suggests that drug use is recognised just as much a *medical* problem as a *criminal* one. Knowing this complex problem, therefore, is envisioned as just as much a task for the scientific community as for legislators and the police. As the second paragraph of the Mission Statement puts it,

Independent, science-based information is a vital resource to help Europe understand the nature of its drug problems and better respond to them. It was on this premise, and in the face of an escalating drug phenomenon, that the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) was established in 1993. Inaugurated in Lisbon in 1995, it is one of the EU's decentralised agencies.

(EMCDDA 2017)

In Callon's terms, this, then, constitutes the first moment of translation: the EMCDDA presents drug use as not only a criminal but also a medical problem, the governance of which requires independent, science-based information. The EMCDDA was set up as a decentralised EU agency to provide this information, serving as an 'obligatory passage point' in the EU's drug policy. How its status has been stabilised through specific devices over time is already part of the second moment of translation, namely *interessement*. During my visit, just a few days after the CDP conference, the EMCDDA also hosted a two-day workshop to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of its key indicators, that is, the unique

devices through which drug use has been made knowable as a problem. Scientists from all across Europe gathered together for the workshop to present primarily statistical data in order to map out the spatial and temporal development of drug use within the EU and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the key indicators (namely, general population surveys, an indicator on drug-related deaths, an indicator on drug-related infectious diseases, a treatment demand indicator and an indicator on high-risk drug use). Thanks to the organisers' interest in my work, I was allowed to attend the meeting. It resembled a normal scientific conference with slides, discussions and coffee breaks, except that the speakers were present not (only) as individual authorities in their own fields, but (also) as components of the EMCDDA's knowledge network. The fourth paragraph of the EMCDDA's Mission Statement nicely illustrates what this means:

At the heart of the agency's work is the promotion of scientific excellence. To achieve its core task of providing sound and comparable information on drugs in Europe, the EMCDDA has developed the infrastructure and tools needed to collect country data in a harmonised way. These data are then fed by national drug monitoring centres (Reitox network) to the Lisbon agency for analysis, resulting in a variety of information products conveying the broader European picture.

(EMCDDA 2017)

When it comes to statistical data, 'infrastructure' is not merely a metaphor (Rottenburg et al. 2015; Verran 2010). Rather, it is a term that denotes the complex web of material-semiotic relations that Callon refers to as the outcome of enrolment – the third moment of translation. Reitox, an abbreviation of 'Réseau Européen d'Information sur les Drogues et les Toxicomanies' (European Information Network on Drugs and Drug Addiction), consists of 30 national focal points, one in each of the 28 EU Member States, one in Norway, and one in Turkey. These national focal points are the organisations responsible for the collection of all the data – both qualitative and quantitative – that constitute the raw material for the EMCDDA. Without the coordinated work of Reitox there could still be data on drug use in each Member State of the EU, but that data would not be *European* data. For in the fourth moment of translation, which Callon calls mobilisation, something remarkable happens: while based on the statistics collected by the national focal points the EMCDDA is busy preparing its annual reports, position papers and scientific articles (see, for example, Mounteney et al. 2015), the comparative tables and complicated graphs become representations of European drug use and, in turn, Europe becomes an entity that is more than just an aggregate of its Member States (and Norway and Turkey). It becomes a political space defined and re-defined by a set of problems and their infrastructures (see also Laurent 2016; Opitz and Tellmann 2015).

Reassembling the social and the question of political relevance

Let me leave the EMCDDA for a moment and return to ANT. Not long after the publication of Michel Callon's paper on the sociology of translation, followed by a series of insightful case studies (for example, Latour 1987, 1988; Law 1986, 1994), ANT's principle of symmetry and its rejection of the micro/macro divide generated heated debates in the social sciences. The concept of the actor-network was fiercely criticised for being too managerial, too Euro-centric, too presentist, to mention only a few accusations (see John Law's overview in Law and Hassard 1999). But despite – or perhaps because of – the debates, in the 1990s and early 2000s ANT became a popular approach among sociologists, cultural anthropologists, human geographers and other scholars in related disciplines. So popular, in fact, that nearly 20 years after the coinage of the term Bruno Latour felt it was necessary to write a 'proper' introduction to ANT (Latour 2005).

Latour's introductory book, titled *Reassembling the Social*, reiterated the sensitivities of earlier formulations of ANT, but its aim was neither to refine its methods, nor to respond to its critics. Rather, its main purpose was to reposition ANT within sociology – a discipline that in Latour's view has been from its very conception, in the second half of the nineteenth century, mistakenly defined as a systematic study of *the social*. This definition is attributed to Émile Durkheim, one of the founding fathers of sociology, who saw 'the social' as something inherently distinct from other domains of reality. At the beginning of his book, Latour (2005) contrasted Durkheim's take on sociology with that of Gabriel Tarde, a contemporary of Durkheim, who – instead of treating social facts as things – had suggested that we treat all things as societies of atoms, cells, persons, cities, stars, even galaxies. If we did so, 'the social' could at last be seen for what it is: a collective of hybrid entities that is constantly in the process of being assembled and reassembled (see also Barry and Thrift 2007).

Latour's discussion of Tarde was more than a backward projection of ANT into the history of the social sciences. It was an attempt to re-specify the role of the social sciences as such, which made ANT and its extended vocabulary travel to such previously uncharted territories as political science, international relations and policy studies. This is why I was only mildly surprised when I first stumbled upon the call for papers for the 2015 Contemporary Drug Problems conference and recognised some terms from *Reassembling the Social*. The call began with the following statement:

Over the past twenty years, a conceptual shift has occurred across the social sciences that increasingly focuses attention on issues of relationality, contingency and emergence. 'Events', 'multi-agent systems', 'trajectories', 'flows', 'hybrids', 'networks', 'phenomena' and 'assemblages' have all emerged as productive, if very different, ways of mapping and understanding the 'social'. Across such work, we can trace a cumulative inclination to decentre the autonomous human subject, to bring into view the range of complex forces and elements producing scientific and social phenomena, to understand

realities as enacted and as inevitably political, and to emphasise the emergent, contingent and multiple co-constitution of objects and subjects.

The call also made it clear how terms like hybrids and assemblages were expected to shape the meeting's agenda:

This conference offers a forum in which the strengths and limitations of these new approaches to alcohol and other drug research can be explored. Building on CDP's two previous conferences [in Prato in 2011 and in Aarhus in 2013], which variously opened up the question of how 'drug problems' are constituted, and how the complexity of drug use might be attended to and managed, we now seek submissions for presentations that grapple with alcohol and other drug use in this new mode, as event, assemblage and phenomenon.

(National Drug Research Institute 2015)

As the beginning of the call suggests, one rationale for the conference was to open up 'the social'. But there was something else going on. As mentioned at the end of the call, the 2015 conference in Lisbon was going to be the third academic meeting associated with the *Contemporary Drug Problems* journal. One of the editors had explained to me that the journal itself is much older than the conferences: it was established in the 1970s in order to provide an intellectual space for studies on drug use that would have been difficult to publish elsewhere. Back then, this field of research was strongly dominated by psychological and epidemiological research; the social sciences were in a rather marginal position. In the past 40 years, the situation has somewhat changed, but qualitative analyses in the leading journals are still few and far between. So the other rationale for the conference was to bring together an international group of social scientists and collectively demonstrate the importance of 'the social' in drug research.

After spending a few days at the EMCDDA and interviewing some of the conference organisers, I attended the conference and tried to explore how drug use was being problematised in various research projects. As I was listening to the keynote lectures and the paper presentations, the tension between a Durkheimian and a Tardean understanding of 'the social' became tangible. The Durkheimian understanding manifested itself in presentations that – implicitly or explicitly – distinguished themselves from the kinds of statistical analyses I was to encounter at the EMCDDA workshop. Instead of large tables, complex graphs, standardised timelines and systematic comparisons, these presentations typically operated with photographs and quotes from documents and/or interviews with drug users. In other words, they used qualitative, rather than quantitative data. But they did more than that: through specific empirical stories, they also drew attention to the fact that the re-framing of drug use as a medical rather than a criminal problem often conceals as much as it reveals. It conceals, for instance, stigmas associated with drug use within a medical context (dos Santos 2015), situations in which drug users are not just passive patients but also active members

of various communities (Rowe 2015), the ways in which the consumption of drugs forms identities stronger than the standard categories of population surveys (Devaney 2015), not to mention the culture of illicit drug markets online (Roxburgh 2015) and in the physical world (Greer 2015). The task of the social sciences, these presentations implied, was to make these and similar aspects of drug use visible, and thereby play an active role in the shaping of national and international drug policies.

The Tardean understanding of ‘the social’ at the CDP conference was articulated somewhat differently. Drawing on Latour’s and other ANT scholars’ works (for example, Gomart and Hennion 1999; Law and Singleton 2005), a couple of presentations used empirical stories in order to investigate how certain versions of reality had been performed into being. Some authors were interested in the ways in which ‘a public’ was being constituted around drug use (Fraser 2015), others investigated how ‘evidence’ was being made suitable for evidence-based drug policy (Lancaster 2015), yet others aimed to decentre the figure of ‘the user’ by following syringe biographies (Vitellone 2015) and analysing drug-body-world entanglements (Dennis 2015). I cannot possibly do justice to these and related papers in a few sentences (for a more detailed summary of the conference see Farrugia 2016 and Moore 2016), but perhaps the connection between them is already clear. Instead of trying to demonstrate the relevance of ‘the social’ in knowing drug use as a problem, in one way or another these studies tried to show how something like ‘the social’ emerges through various contingent, material and discursive practices that involve a range of substances, human bodies, syringes, media technologies, knowledge infrastructures and built environments (see also Duff 2011).

Interestingly, despite the tension between these different understandings of ‘the social’, there were no big debates at the conference. No one was openly opposed to the idea of translating ANT into the language of drug research – after all, this had been one of the main reasons for the event. However, during lunch and coffee breaks, a couple of participants told me they were not convinced the vocabulary of ANT helped them much. Admittedly, the proposed terms and moves were clever, but they ‘lacked political bite’. In other words, when it came to drug use as a *social* problem, these terms and moves were perceived as not critical – or not critical enough. I had heard these accusations before. Latour tried to explicitly address them in the last chapter of *Reassembling the Social*, where he wrote:

If it has been difficult to pinpoint exactly where ANT’s political project resides – and thus where it errs and should be redressed – it’s because the definition of what it is for a social science to have a political relevance has also to be modified.

(Latour 2005, 253; see also Latour 2004)

What Latour did not mention in his book is that the modification of the definition of political relevance cannot be done in a general way. Rather, it needs to be

worked out empirically, over and over again. At least this is what I told my colleagues in the coffee breaks at the CDP conference. They looked unconvinced; I wish I could have told them what I was going to witness in the outskirts of Lisbon a few days after the conference.

Care in practice

Latour's introductory book to ANT was meant to be an intervention in the social sciences. Similar to earlier works on laboratories (Knorr-Cetina 1981; Latour and Woolgar 1986; Law 1994), it was supposed to show that the ways in which scientists conceptualise their objects of research – at the CDP conference drug use as a *social* problem – are necessarily interlinked with the ways in which a political reality centred around those objects comes into being. Calling certain phenomena problems, for example, implies that there are various solutions to choose from. Or does it?

Annemarie Mol suggests otherwise. In her material-semiotic analysis of diabetes in the Netherlands, she contrasts two specific organising logics that are simultaneously technical, scientific and political (Mol 2008, see also Chapter 4 this volume). One organising logic is associated with 'choice'. Materialised in such devices as portable blood glucose meters, this logic problematises diabetes as a disease individuals may *have*. Far from being passive, individuals with diabetes are constantly expected to make decisions – about their meals, for example. Thanks to new medical technologies, they can monitor their blood sugar levels, which means they are no longer reliant upon medical institutions in determining what they can eat, when and how often. Choice, in this sense, has an empowering effect. At the same time, if individuals with diabetes keep making the wrong decisions about their diet, which worsens their condition over time, they only have themselves to blame.

The logic of choice, Mol argues, permeates the Western world: it is recognisable in the workings not only of markets (which figure individuals as consumers), but also of political institutions (which figure individuals as citizens, or even more narrowly, as voters). However, this does not mean that the logic of choice is the only game in town. Anyone who has seen a medical institution from the inside knows the quiet practices that connect doctors, patients, meals and medications in ways that cannot be described in terms of clear choices. Mol associates these practices with the logic of care. According to this logic, diabetes is a distributed disease – something individuals may be *implicated in*, along with a range of other entities, from friends and family members to nurses and fellow patients. Caring is, in this respect, an ongoing negotiation during which different understandings of a good life need to be handled together, even if they clash with each other. It might be difficult to agree upon a single solution to a specific problem, but it might be possible to explore what makes living with that problem better or worse.

I could make the contrast between the logic of choice and the logic of care even stronger, but for the purpose of this chapter I only wish to emphasise three points. The first is that – even though Mol does not explicitly use the vocabulary

of Callon's or Latour's works – the logic of care is an important contribution to ANT, as it demonstrates that actor-networks are hardly ever singular. In other words, connections between human and nonhuman entities hardly ever 'add up' to form a coherent whole. Rather, phenomena are caught up in, and produced by, multiple actor-networks (see Law 2002; Law and Mol 2002; Mol 2002). The second point follows directly from this: as Mol's work on diabetes shows, some actor-networks tend to be more robust than others. In relation to the logics of choice and care, Mol and her colleagues point out that:

if care practices are not carefully attended to, there is a risk that they will be eroded. If they are only talked about in terms that are not appropriate to their specificities, they will be submitted to rules and regulations that are alien to them. This threatens to take the heart out of care – and along with this not just its kindness but also its effectiveness, its tenacity and its strength.
(Mol, Moser and Pols 2010, 7)

Which brings me to my third point. Care is not something we, researchers, merely observe from the sideline, but a series of practices we are involved in, even if that involvement is limited to attending to those practices on their own terms (see also Martin, Myers and Viseu 2015). I was reminded of the importance of this last point when a friend of mine asked if I wanted to visit a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works with drug addicts in Lisbon. She knew I was in town for the EMCDDA workshop and the CDP conference, and thought that after so many presentations a somewhat different field experience might do me good. She was right.

A few days after the end of the CDP conference, my friend accompanied me to an organisation called Crescer, which roughly translates as 'grow up' (Crescer 2017). The organisation has been running harm reduction and community development programmes for 15 years. The professionals – psychologists, nurses, doctors and social workers, mostly women in their late 20s and early 30s – do their rounds on the streets of eastern and western Lisbon every day, except Sunday. They exchange needles, hand out condoms and foil, distribute smoking pipes (for smoked cocaine), help to find doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists and other experts, and while doing so constitute a stable reference point for more than 1,500 clients.

Crescer's office is in the western part of the city, on the ground floor in a run-down block. We started the day with coffee in the small café next door. The team workers told me how they got to the organisation. When I asked them whether they were working as volunteers they raised their eyebrows. 'Why should such a serious job be done by volunteers?' No, they were all employed, trained sociologists, psychologists, social workers. I was assigned to the eastern group. With Andreia and Marta, my friend and I walked to a white car and drove off to the first location: an abandoned factory building.

In accordance with Portuguese drug policy, in Lisbon there is a strong emphasis on harm reduction. Although there are a couple of needle exchange points (such

as IN-Mouraria), there are no consumption rooms, which means some clients use abandoned buildings, parking lots, dark hallways as sites for shooting up, mostly heroine. At the factory building we met two clients: they looked like they were a couple. The woman, who might have been in her early 50s, looked as if she had just cut her leg with something: she was slowly stumbling towards the team workers to have her needles exchanged. She dropped ten needles in the container and took two green packages in exchange. The packages contained sterile needles, citric acid, disinfectant wipes, stericups, condoms and distilled water. It was hot in the sun, nearly 30 degrees, and the building reeked of piss and shit. There was drug-related litter everywhere: I saw dozens of green plastic bags (from the packages), but no used needles.

About half an hour later we moved on to the next site: a ruined public bath. We did not meet anyone there, but it was clear that the place was used by many people. I asked Marta and Andreia what their relationship was with the police. They said that as outreach team workers they often found themselves between the clients and the police, and in such cases they tended to be on the side of the clients. Gaining and retaining trust is the most important part of their job, and the police know this, too. The Portuguese drug policy, which is one of the most progressive within the EU, has been based on decriminalisation since the early 1990s, which means no one gets arrested for simply using drugs. This makes life easier both for the outreach team workers and for the clients: the former do not have to worry about confrontation with the authorities while the latter do not have to experiment with unknown substances in order to avoid incarceration.

This also means that the change of the drug scene is due less to new drugs than to gentrification. Our third location was a parking lot near a suburban residential area while the fourth was an inner city quarter, near Intendente (a metro station). A couple of years ago, this was the toughest part of town: prostitution, public drug use and related crimes had deterred 'normal Lisbon residents' even during the day. This apparently is part of the past. During our visit, we spotted a sex worker every now and then, but among large groups of tourists they blended into the background. When the sex workers saw Marta and Andreia approaching, they greeted them and exchanged stories about recent developments.

I would have loved to stay longer and learn more about the area, but the outreach team workers had to return to the main office, so we parted ways. Afterwards, I kept thinking about the experience in terms of care. Is Crescer's take on drug use similar to that of the EMCDDA, which frames it as a criminal *and* a medical problem? In the context of harm reduction, this seems to be a false dichotomy (see Hardon and Hymans 2016). During street work, drug users were referred to as clients, rather than patients, which assumes an altogether different kind of relationship. Does this mean that drug use was conceptualised as a *social* problem, as was suggested at the CDP conference? Perhaps, but the political space around this problem was also figured differently. Political relevance was articulated not vis-à-vis European or Portuguese drug policy, no matter how progressive, but as an ongoing commitment towards a community. To be sure, this commitment is not incompatible with other forms of politics, but – as Mol

and her colleagues remind us – to reduce it to these other forms would run the risk of eroding it.

Discussion: from bad translation to good treason

As stated in the introduction, my aim in this chapter has been neither to provide a comprehensive overview of the development of ANT as a particular social scientific approach, nor to summarise its key works. Instead, I have tried to show empirically how ANT might be used for the analysis of politics in different but partially related ways. In the first part, I have used Michel Callon's work on the sociology of translation to show how drug use is being framed as a criminal *and* a medical problem in Europe, and how, in turn, it contributes to the making of Europe as a political space governed through specific problems and their technical infrastructures. In the second part of the chapter, I have shown how dominant ways of knowing are being challenged by social scientists, many of whom emphasise the importance of treating drug use as a *social* problem. Drawing on Bruno Latour's introductory book to ANT, I have discussed how different ways of defining 'the social' assume different versions of political relevance. Some of these are implicitly or explicitly defined in terms of drug policy, but others operate differently. In the third part, I have turned to Annemarie Mol and her work on the logic of care to articulate that difference, and by doing so, acknowledge the politics associated with alternative ways of engaging with drug use as a problem – looking for better ways of living with drugs being one of them.

In all of these episodes, translation as a concept has played a central role. In the first episode, it allowed me to trace connections between a wide range of entities, from the employees of the EMCDDA through statistical data to Europe, and to describe how politics is being done through technical means. In the second episode, translation has helped me better understand how ANT is being used by social scientists to make their knowledge practices politically relevant, either by confirming or questioning the division of labour between science and politics. Finally, in the third episode, I have done the translation work myself as I have tried to make sense of harm reduction practices in Lisbon according to the logic of care. However, as many ANT scholars have pointed out, translation is always also an act of treason (see Galis and Lee 2014), as it necessarily modifies the entities that are implicated in the process. By drawing up new contexts, making new juxtapositions and assigning new meanings, equivalence is necessarily rendered impossible. What I hope to have demonstrated in this chapter is that the strength of ANT in studying politics lies not in the avoidance of bad translation, but in the ongoing exploration of what may count as good treason.

Acknowledgements

This chapter is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Lisbon in 2015. I am deeply grateful to the employees of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the organisers of the 2015 CDP

conference and the outreach team workers at Crescer and IN-Mouraria for all their help during the research. I would also like to thank Nina Amelung, Madalena Corte-Real and Róbert Csák for the inspiring discussions in Lisbon, as well as Tobias Berger, Alejandro Esguerra and the participants of the two workshops in Duisburg and Potsdam for the insightful comments on earlier versions of this text.

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3 The travelling concept of organized crime and the stabilization of securitized international cooperation

A translational reading

Holger Stritzel

Introduction

In the many years of its evolution, the concept of organized crime has shifted multiple times its meaning, functions and principal operational logics in the political discourse from being an issue of little concern to being considered a key security threat facing states and societies worldwide. The process started with diffuse notions of Mafia, which first spread to and became translated in the USA, where the term ‘organized crime’ itself was created in discourses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and from there it was adopted in various other sites, the European Union (EU), United Nations (UN), G7/G8 as well as further domestic settings, prominently in Europe and Latin America. Far from being a process driven by a single actor or a small group in relation to a single valued referent object, organized crime was continuously constituted and reconfigured through different operational logics, rationalities and a sense of the rules of the game in different fields of action. What emerged in the 1990s and temporarily stabilized as an excessively broad and securitized notion of ‘transnational organized crime’ in political discourse had in fact developed and was held together through those previous encounters in different locations at national, regional and global levels.

Organized crime as a travelling concept illustrates that the evolution of collective interpretations of perceived threats often transcends time and space: once interpretations are established in one location, typically – but not necessarily – at the national level first, their further genesis will extend beyond the geographical and temporal dimensions of their initial invention. Accepted interpretations of threats thus have the potential to travel to and establish connections between locations, be they national, regional or global, this way encountering a great variety of local discourses and operational logics in and among these locations on their travel. Each encounter may then transform the initial interpretation and adapt it to the particularities of the new location, which may in turn inspire new, or reconfigure existing, operational logics and connections as a result.

How can one capture this process of emergence, spread and transformation, which establishes connections within and among locales with regards to accepted

interpretations of perceived threats and the concept of organized crime more specifically? What happens when the collective interpretation of a perceived threat created and temporarily established in one location encounters a new one? How does the ‘foreign’ meaning become incorporated and productively appropriated into the new location or not, and with what effects? What are the driving forces of this process?

It will be argued in this chapter that the concepts of securitization and translation offer useful tools for capturing and reflecting upon these processes, focusing analytically on the performative and political effects of concepts and conceptual travel more generally. To begin with, the chapter will provide an overview of securitization theory and translation, followed by a brief introduction to organized crime narratives and their process of transnational spread. The second section will apply these reflections to the action of the USA with regard to organized crime, demonstrating its construction as a ‘threat’, placing crime in the realm of national security and legitimizing the use of extraordinary means. The third section will explore the active exportation of the US concept of organized crime in international cooperation, examining how many partnerships with external actors have taken a securitized form. The fourth section will conclude by asking whether there are indications of a ‘securitization fatigue’ in the international stabilization of organized crime in recent years, which would coincide with the emergence of new policy entrepreneurs and norms replacing the previous securitized approach to organized crime, specifically with regard to narcotics.

Subject matter and theoretical toolset

Securitization in translation

At its core, securitization aims to conceptually transform the notion of national security into a distinct discursive reading of (radical realist) security practice (Stritzel and Vuori 2016). In securitization theory, ‘security’ is not seen as an objective condition, but as the outcome of a specific discursive process which brings about new security situations by successfully representing them as such.¹ According to the theory, with the articulation of something as a matter of (national) security, a speaker dramatizes an issue as an existential threat to a valued referent object so that he or she can legitimately claim a need to treat it with extraordinary measures, involving the breaking of normal rules of regular political process (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, 24–9; Wæver 1995, 35). The defining feature of securitization is therefore a specific rhetoric which marks an issue as a threat to survival, requiring priority of action and a sense of extreme urgency, so that audiences accept – or at least do not oppose – measures that would otherwise not be acquiesced.

This understanding of the logic and effects of ‘national security’ has its origins in the transformation of military and political discourse from defence to national security in an evolving Cold War context under Harry S. Truman where the concept of security emerged as a tool to explain the USA’s relationship with

the rest of the world and to curtail the traditional American mistrust of standing armies in this context (Yergin 1977, 193–4). While defence was usually understood as following geopolitical lines, security was freed from this constraint, as it could be defined according to the needs of ‘national interests’. Therefore, national security (specifically as subsequently outlined in the (in)famous National Security Act of 1947) provided a means to retain a form of radical *ragione di stato* (state reason) policies of very profound, potentially absolute, state authority and preservation in an era when democratic ethics seemed to be making such a way of thinking increasingly unacceptable.² First the national interest, and then national security, were thus ways to address the ‘democrat’s dilemma’ in the US context of combining democratic values in domestic politics with a perceived amoral and anarchic international system. As such, national security could justify drastic international measures including military interventions, political assassinations and war as well as severe restrictions on individual freedom and citizens’ rights in the domestic sphere.³

Against this background, the critical political purpose of securitization theory that evolved in the late 1980s context of (second) *détente* but became more prominent after the end of the Cold War is not only to analytically capture and explore but ultimately also to potentially escape this dangerous logic of security: ‘More and more trans-national activities should become purely “economic”, “social” and “political”’ (Wæver 1989, 314) rather than issues of security where states claim the right to use any means necessary to hinder a development which goes against its perceived interests. Furthermore, proponents of securitization theory argued that the pitfalls of conventional, previous understandings of security could be avoided by focusing not on what security means, but on what security does or, more precisely, on what is done by ‘speaking’ or ‘doing’ security, and by studying its social and political effects.

As we will see, this latter aspect is particularly relevant when the (securitized) concept travels and encounters different contexts and thus potentially generates very different social, political and cultural dynamics, as well as socio-political effects. When (securitized) concepts travel, they reach beyond the specific discursive dynamics of their initial location and genesis. Concepts typically encounter a variety of new discourses which potentially reiterate, transform or challenge the interpretations initially associated with the concept and adapt it to the particularities of the new setting. As argued in this chapter, processes of securitization in a certain setting will take the form of *translations*, understood as performative processes of transformation of meaning through notions of passage and encounter (see Stritzel 2011a; 2014, 56–60).

At the heart of this understanding of translation is a particular claim with regard to the production of knowledge, which suggests that producing knowledge continuously transforms past or related meaning, and that such a process of production is never entirely original. As a consequence, from this perspective, the notion of translation deliberately places any particular concept or production of security in specific temporal and spatial sequences, conceptualized as emergent

and continuing communicative relationships, which actively (re)creates and connects different forms of agency. As Freeman pointed out:

What is described as translation is often the result of multiple iterations by multiple actors . . . The sense of ‘source’ or ‘origin’ is simply a translation we have failed to reconstruct. What we think of as research or policy or practice is an emergent property of complex and continuing communicative relationships.

(Freeman 2009, 441)

This general aspect of concept formation read through translation lenses is significantly exacerbated in a scenario of transnationally travelling concepts. Here, the presence of multiple audiences and criteria for the temporary discursive hegemony of a concept become visible. Furthermore, a securitizing move becomes considerably more unstable and unpredictable because the intended effect of, for example, persuading an audience to provide legitimacy for a speaker to deal with a perceived threat in one setting may lead to delegitimization and loss of power for this or other speakers in a different setting (and with regard to different ‘relevant audiences’). In such cases, the declaration of an emergency condition in relation to a particular issue may have the effect of persuading one audience and centralizing a process of decision-making in one setting, but the opposite effect of resistance, polarization and/or empowerment of new actors and practices in a new setting (Acharya 2011; Zwingel 2016). Thus, securitizing moves and their social and political effects differ in substance and effect, while happening on a continuous, gradually transforming basis. These transforming processes are typically heavily interspersed with distinct local operational logics and are thus translated differently in different places and at different times. From a translational perspective, they are the product of multiple iterations reconfiguring existing narratives and thereby (re)connecting different forms of agency in and among different settings (Stritzel 2014, 2011a). It is this potentially highly ambivalent and contradictory assemblage of different dynamics that establishes, spreads and holds together securitized concepts and (international) cooperation.

The concept of organized crime

Origins of contemporary organized crime narratives are deeply interspersed with much earlier notions of Mafia in Italian and American discourse. According to Henner Hess (1973, 1–4), the term ‘Mafia’ itself first appeared in a 1658 document containing a list of heretics referring to ‘boldness’, ‘ambition’ and ‘arrogance’. These personal traits subsequently turned into distinct social constructions of masculinity within the Italian discourse and are today associated to the concept of ‘Sicilianism’ in Italy. Both references to the Arabic *mahias*, meaning a bold man or braggart, and origins of the word that refer to the meanings ‘outstanding’, ‘manly’ or ‘handsome’ (Hess 1973, 1), as well as *mahud*, meaning ‘rejected’, strongly resonate with the perceived moral codes that are assumed to have evolved in

southern Italy at that time. They are marked by 'a proud awareness of one's own personality, of independence in every respect, the ability to look after oneself and to defend one's own dignity at any price' (Hess 1973, 9). Grounded in these moral codes, according to this narrative, single criminals organized themselves in loosely structured groups and cliques which occasionally cooperated with or fought against other such groups.⁴ In the course of the twentieth century these early images were combined and partially replaced by notions of Mafia as an almighty 'parallel society', a quasi-state within the traditional democratic state that would challenge conventional forms of governance and power and would thus pose an imminent danger to the democratic state in its liberal existence (Smith 1975, 40–5).

These narratives encountered the American discourse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, where they became merged with the newly coined term 'organized crime'. While the exact words 'organized crime' were presumably first used in the 1896 annual report of the New York Society for the Prevention of Crime, in those days organized crime had no stable meaning and could be understood only in context (Woodiwiss 2003). From the 1920s onwards, the term gradually stabilized in the American discourse and enabled a first wave of politicization and partial securitization, specifically from the Kefauver Committee hearings onwards. This led in the 1950s, under the proactive leadership of Robert Kennedy, to several emergency acts including the influential Racketeer Influenced and Corrupted Organizations (RICO) statute of 1970 (Paoli and Fijnaut 2004; Stritzel 2012). The process of securitization further intensified and eventually initiated a significant radicalization and militarization of the discourse specifically in the context of Richard Nixon's and subsequent US presidents' 'War on Drugs' in which issues in relation to organized crime were portrayed and practised most clearly as an imminent 'national security threat' to the USA, particularly under Ronald Reagan. This had significant domestic and international effects including a process of increasing militarization of US domestic policing as well as international enforcement and crop eradication strategies in several Latin American countries, perhaps most prominently Bolivia, Colombia and Mexico. The increasing militarization of organized crime narratives and political practices coincided with a comprehensive externalization strategy by the USA bilaterally and through international organizations such as the UN (Nadelmann 1994). The UN Conventions in this area (1961, 1971, 1988) were particularly instrumental in exporting the US securitization of organized crime to the global stage, temporarily establishing a 'global norm' of repressive law enforcement in relation to drugs. It also paved the way for the influential UN conference on transnational organized crime with the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan signed in 1994 which is today widely seen as a crucial turning point in the cooperative global fight against organized crime.

Yet, to the extent that the concept of organized crime left the US location and travelled, through active externalization and local adaptations, to new ones, the concept was now also confronted with several new local discourse traditions and distinct operational logics in these locations, which were not always under the full control of the USA. The process of spreading and the meaning of organized

crime significantly diversified and fragmented as a result and increasingly went beyond a straightforward story of simple US exportation. In addition to the initial US dominance in the securitization and spread of organized crime as a concept to the world stage, its subsequent evolution was marked by the agency of various local adaptations of organized crime. Hence, this constitutes its genesis overall as a tale of multiple translations that temporarily stabilized securitized international cooperation.

The securitization of organized crime

As identified in the section on securitization in translation above, a ‘security’ issue arises through a discursive process in which a traditionally non-security issue is redefined by a sense of existential threat, extreme urgency and national/state survival. Hence, the first essential questions to answer empirically are whether and how the USA successfully securitized its approach to issues in relation to organized crime, thereby establishing a new norm from its own belief system and domestic setting, but then also increasingly through exportation to other states.

Domestic securitization and norm emergence: from politicization to securitization

First stage: between politicization and securitization

When early Italian narratives of Mafia entered the USA in the late nineteenth century, representations of organized crime initially remained diffuse and strongly linked to popular culture, marked by a complex body of diverse narratives and anecdotes about gang fights, bosses, saloons, prostitution and different forms of ‘criminal entrepreneurship’ of early urban crime in America (Glaab and Brown 1976). According to these narratives, gradually more organized forms of criminal activity evolved out of the anarchy of the immigrant ghettos and the criminal leaders that had been established increasingly sought protection through collaboration with politicians and policemen. These stories of corruption and a growing ‘political machine system’ in early twentieth century USA received a further boost with the Prohibition period, which also entered into mass culture, especially the US gangster film. Typical constructions of masculinity such as power, ambition, bravery, strength and violence that had marked Italian narratives about the Mafia as Sicilianism here gained a strong entrepreneurial, business-like notion with most films focusing on single charismatic leaders. The creators of the gangster genre thus adapted traditional constructions of Mafia masculinity to US socio-political culture and the settings of modern urban society, for which cities such as Chicago were perceived to be particularly emblematic at that time.

From the 1920s onwards, political interventions stabilized and politicized these popular representations and added an element of specificity and (temporary)

fixity to the concept of organized crime in the American discourse. The first of these initiatives was the Kefauver Committee hearings of 1950. They constitute a decisive period for the initial political framing of organized crime, created a distinct plot structure for the perceived threat in the US setting and helped to initiate a first wave of intensification in the political discourse. Crucially, this process eventually forced the influential, but initially very sceptical, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under J. Edgar Hoover to side with a growing coalition of securitizing actors in order to (re)gain leadership in the initiative, for which Robert Kennedy provided the necessary political backing (Wilson 1978, 202–3; Smith 1975, 187). In the early 1960s, a strong coalition consisting of the FBI, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) and a proactive Attorney General Robert Kennedy could work together to establish organized crime as an existential threat in the USA and introduce several emergency acts, including the RICO statute of 1970 (Paoli and Fijnaut 2004, 26–7).

With regard to rhetoric, during this first stage of emergence, securitizing actors in the USA clearly applied a language of existential threat and securitization (Stritzel 2012, 561–3; 2014, 89–93). This is true of all the principal securitizing actors at that time including Kennedy ([1966] 1994, 75, 162, 253), Kefauver ([1951] 1968, 12–17), Anslinger (1962, 9, 17), McClellan (1962, 269–71) and J. Edgar Hoover (Stritzel 2014, 91). Yet, it is less clear at this stage whether a process of securitization was also fully implemented. While measures constituted a new situation of rather far-reaching repressive law enforcement that went beyond ‘normal political procedures’, they at least did not militarize the actual practice of dealing with issues in relation to organized crime. One could argue that they were not practised as national security, at least if narrowly defined.⁵

Second stage: between securitization and militarization

A process of securitization as militarization was instead only truly initiated and practised under the presidencies of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan when the previously established existential threat of organized crime was rearticulated and transformed in the securitized practice of a War on Drugs. This coincided with a change in focus from gambling and racketeering to narcotics, which paralleled a growing trend between 1961 and 1988 indicating a general shift in dealing with narcotics towards securitization: the initial drug use paradigm of proactively eradicating the causes of addiction and abuse, changed into a reactive focus on criminality, law and order and punishment, transforming the image of the drug user as a dangerous threat that needed to be contained before he or she could harm society and the state. Furthermore, after reports of American soldiers in Vietnam engaging in the widespread use of heroin reached Washington, the attention of the War on Drugs increasingly also shifted globally establishing not only the drug user as a threat to the state, but also drug trafficking. This triggered a perceived need for partnerships with external states, especially those where the production of drugs was perceived to be occurring as well as other perceived ‘drug consumer states’ in Europe.

The domestic process of this development began with the Controlled Substances Act of 1970 and US President Richard Nixon's famous declaration of a War on Drugs in 1971, which initiated a change in discourse and practices (Musto and Korsmeyer 2002). Radio and television networks became eager to donate advertisement time to public information campaigns about the drug threat, to incorporate drug themes into their dramas or to create new dramas that focused on drug enforcement (Epstein 1977, 165–72). This public awareness campaign finally culminated in Nixon's Special Message to Congress on 17 June 1971 in which he portrayed the problem of drug abuse as a 'national emergency' against which 'effective war' had to be waged and 'worldwide escalation' initiated (Nixon 1971). Most notably, apart from further funding for large media campaigns and educational programmes and the emergence of new anti-narcotics lobby groups and organizations, this included punitive legislative measures such as inclusions of no-knock warrants and strict mandatory sentencing, as well as substantially increased numbers of arrests and incarcerations of drug users and distributors (Bewley-Taylor and Jelsma 2007). The National Security Directive 221 in 1986 then formally identified drug trafficking as an existential threat to the US state, a theme which later found its way into the 1988 UN Convention Against Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Crick 2012).

This led to a substantial empowerment and increase in the size and presence of American federal drug control agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and the construction of a joint endeavour of the US military, police and intelligence agencies to combat this new threat to national security. The DEA, originally designed to act in conjunction with local police forces in the War on Drugs, increasingly turned international, opening more than 45 international offices between 1970 and 1989 alone and acting as the central agency to coordinate combat operations in Latin American countries as part of Special Enforcement Operations to eradicate drug export networks worldwide (Nadelmann 1994).

In returning to the Copenhagen School's definition of securitization, one can see that the US approach to managing narcotics ticks all the necessary boxes. The securitization of drugs developed out of a socio-political process, facilitated primarily by political leadership which shifted a relatively limited and non-popularized topic to the forefront of national security concerns. Drug control became the War on Drugs, legitimizing the use of increased enforcement and the militarization of responses by attaching a benign subject to national security and by emphasizing a requirement for urgent response. The War on Drugs, the related Controlled Substances Act and leadership-driven political and media campaigns supported the securitization transition of existing domestic narcotics approaches. Equally, one can say that the evolving War on Drugs paradigm represented a new standard of appropriateness in the US discourse, challenging conventional and entrenched models of previous action. The new norm which emerged in the USA was the securitization of drug enforcement, eventually supported by a 64 per cent approval rate in public opinion polls in September 1989 of increased enforcement measures against what Americans now viewed as the number one

threat facing their state and which fuelled the US government's push to export these new domestic standards and ideals abroad.

Internationalizing domestic securitization

From the 1980s onwards, the USA convinced a critical mass of countries to join its War on Drugs both bilaterally and by using international organizations as a platform for the promotion of its own agenda, institutionalizing the securitized War on Drugs as a specific set of new international rules and practices.

The last 40 years have been hallmarked by the USA acting as the principal bulwark for an international drug control regime that emphasized criminality, enforcement and a partial militarization of the subject matter (Reuter 2013). Original treaty negotiations first culminating in the 1914 Hague Convention as well as more contemporary initiatives through the UN, including the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1988 Convention Against Illicit Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, were indeed initiated and strongly influenced by the USA. This is particularly true with regard to the latter. The 1988 Convention Against Illicit Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances requiring all signatory states to make possession of drugs a criminal offence drew heavily on legal approaches, normative values and a language already established in US law at the time and was even partially pre-scripted by the National Security Directive 221 of 1986 (Crick 2012). Similarly, the UN definition of organized crime as a group was adapted and changed according to US standards, by focusing on specifically structured groups of people embodied by narcotics traffickers and drug cartels (Crick 2012, 411). Interestingly, the USA in turn used the Convention as a means of legitimizing their own national certification mechanism in which trade and aid agreements were directly tied to a number of counter-narcotics measures and foreign countries were required to deliver a report card to Congress on how they met the international agreement's goals and objectives. The certification programme itself allowed the USA to apply discretionary sanctions in the form of ending preferential tariff treatment, limiting air traffic and increasing duties on product exports to the USA.⁶

Yet, pressure to follow the US approach was not only exerted directly and bilaterally as through the US certification system, but it also involved the agency of various international bodies and global initiatives that were influenced by the USA, mainly at the UN level, such as the UN Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization (Ayling 2005). Some scholars have argued that several of these institutions such as the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control became, in essence, direct tools of the USA with its funding deliberately directed to projects of US allies (Sinha 2001) while organizations such as the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), charged to design and implement programmes to prevent the cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and use of illicit drugs, became the primary point of compliance advice for states party to the above UN treaties. Therefore,

both international organizations – partially derived from American initiative and pressure – and domestic government bodies operating globally presented themselves as agents of change, pushing the world system towards a securitized approach to issues in relation to organized crime and narcotics.

Ayling (2005, 376) shows that before 1989 41 states had engineered or were in the process of creating drug policies similar to those found in the USA. US and international pressure then added another 66 countries between 1989 and 1999. Furthermore, by 2003 the number of states which had signed the 1971 and 1988 conventions rested at 172 and 166 respectively (Bewley-Taylor 2003, 172), while as of 2013 those numbers had grown to 183 and 188.

The pressure to cooperate that the USA exerted through its international drug response regime and its direct involvement⁷ had particularly severe effects on Latin American countries and has been one of the main factors spurring the region's armed forces to heavily intervene in domestic affairs with 50,000 military troops to combat drug violence in Mexico under Felipe Calderón alone (Rawlins 2013; Lier 2012). Yet, initiatives were not limited to the UN or to coercive bilateral actions but were gradually also adopted more voluntarily by other international bodies and organizations including the TREVI Group, the G7/G8 and the Council of Europe (Scherrer 2009) as well as within several national settings, through processes of local appropriation and translation.

Incorporating securitization in Europe

In Europe, organized crime narratives gradually entered both EU and European national discourses in the 1970s and 1980s and initiated a process of translation through voluntary incorporation before becoming part of a wider array of more autonomous European policy measures and narratives. With the exception of Italy, European states had initially understood organized crime to be an external, foreign issue and had not felt the need, up until the 1980s, to adopt legislation or specific instruments in this area (Mitsilegas 2003). Just a few decades later, this turned into a situation where organized crime featured with terrorism as the number one threat to Europe's internal security; as the second most important objective of the EU for its Area of Freedom, Security and Justice; as perceived to be profoundly interrelated with migration and terrorism; and as one of the regions with the highest amount of anti-organized crime initiatives (European Commission 2010; Paoli and Fijnaut 2004, 633–7). Similar processes of politicization and securitization occurred in parallel at the European national levels.

At the international European level, the 1986 Stoffelen Report by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe 1986) was initially instrumental in creating an early threat perception for this issue in Europe. Furthermore, at the national level, member states such as Germany and Italy had increasingly adopted a narrative of organized crime as a security concern which rapidly evolved into attempts to upload this narrative to the European Community (EC)/EU level. As a result, the initial heterogeneity in European understandings of organized crime gradually started to fade. Den Boer (2002) argues that this process was

eventually marked by a principal change from counter-organized crime efforts at the national level to the European one and a move of the EC/EU from an initial position of securitization importer to a position of securitizing actor, facilitated by the completion of the Single Market and, subsequently, of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.

At the EU level, this process was at first not immediately reflected in EC/EU discourse and practices. The practice gradually made its way to the EC/EU through a process of portraying drug abuse as a threat that would submerge Europe and as an issue where support should be demonstrated for international organizations active in this area, prominently the UN and the Council of Europe (European Commission 1986; European Council 1986). Although at the time there was no intention of replacing these organizations in the fight against drugs, the EC considered specific action essential 'in view of the fact that the efforts of the individual member states to combat illicit drugs have so far failed to produce the desired results' (European Commission 1986, 5). Thus one can see that in the mid-1980s there was the beginning of a transition in Europe from a health perspective to a law enforcement one in the context of which 'there is every need to improve and intensify international collaboration, particularly as regards the production and traffic of drugs' (European Council 1986, 6). This transition was significantly accelerated by the willingness to complete the Single Market, but also by direct contact between the US government and EC ministers, which included the participation of US representatives in EC ministers' meetings as observers and the training of European police officers by the FBI (Fijnaut 1990).

The discourse in the EU setting was marked by a gradual translation of the rather diffuse concept of organized crime into, essentially, 'operationalizable data', as made evident in various organized crime 'reports' starting with the 'Organized Crime Situation Reports' of 1994 and 1995 up to the more recent 'Organized Crime Threat Assessment Reports' (Vander Beken 2006). The ultimate purpose of these initiatives was to operationalize and technocratically control organized crime through the processes of translation from a diffuse political and (pop) cultural concept into a 'standardized mechanism' marked by agreed upon common guidelines for measurements, methodologies for data collection, questionnaires, statistics and eventually a harmonized, common response to the issue at stake (Council of the European Union 2000a, 2000b). This way, organized crime was reconfigured through a distinct operational logic and rationality in the specific setting of the EU, which locally adapted organized crime for the perceived needs of the new context.

Another example at the national level of distinct local redefinition and appropriation is visible in Germany (Stritzel 2011; 2014, 95–116). Here the process of translation of organized crime into a distinctly German narrative of *Organisierte Kriminalität* was first visible in various expert journals and major institutional initiatives. Similar to the EU level, organized crime here also became adapted to the specific operational logics, bureaucratic interests and established professional routines which eventually, since the mid-/late 1980s, became merged with high-level political initiatives and the process of Europeanizing internal

security as described above. Yet, for these translations to work for the specific German setting, organized crime had to be recontextualized and redefined, appropriating US narratives for a new setting (Stritzel 2011b, 2014). At the level of legal definitions and operational procedures, this was mainly achieved through a series of institutional redefinitions from the early 1970s until the early 1990s which consecutively blurred, and eventually erased, previous Mafia and US organized crime connotations of ‘elaborate organizational structures’ and ‘extensive divisions of labour’, to replace them with more flexible and abstract German definitions of organized crime (Stritzel 2014, 102–6). This deliberate ‘conceptual stretching’ (Stritzel 2011b, 2496–7) also made organized crime more compatible with the diversity in Europe.

Towards securitization fatigue and resurgence?

In the previous sections, the emergence of a global organized crime discourse has been reconstructed as a securitized practice that evolved through US initiative and pressure as well as through the processes of local translation. To conclude, it is necessary to mention scholars who see traces of a securitization fatigue in the international cooperation with regard to organized crime and narcotics, marked in recent years by developments towards legislative decriminalization and legalization. Indeed, several critical producer states increasingly seem to be developing new norms towards narcotics activities with the aim of reducing related violence and criminality. For example, in 2008 Bolivia declared the cessation of their participation in the War on Drugs, stating that the DEA would have facilitated conflict and violence particularly in the state’s eastern lowlands (Friedman-Rudovsky 2008). Similarly, the former heads of Brazil, Mexico and Colombia argued in 2009 that prohibitionist policies based on eradication, criminalization and militarization had failed and were responsible for the violence linked to the narcotics trade (Cardoso, Gaviria and Zedillo. 2009). Former Mexican President Felipe Calderón (2006–12) also eventually joined the growing group of these new policy entrepreneurs in 2012 by arguing that consumer states in the West need to accept more responsibility for the drug violence crises affecting Latin America. He maintained the region should rather become a testing ground for alternative approaches including market solutions and legalization as a means of reducing the cash flow to organized crime (Luhnow 2013). Perhaps most importantly in 2011, the Global Commission on Drug Policy (comprised of several presidents from production states, former heads of UN bodies and business leaders) published an influential ‘Report on Drugs’ recommending a transformation of the global prohibition regime towards experimental models of legal regulation and decriminalization as a means of undermining the power of organized crime and ending the associated violence. By 2013 more actors had joined this anti-securitization movement. Uruguay, for example, became the first state to legalize the cultivation and distribution of marijuana in 2013 (Forero 2013); and Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the official ‘White House Czar’ under Obama, argued that the

USA should give treatment rather than focus on incarceration and securitization (Fields 2009) and end the previously strongly law enforcement-centric War on Drugs (Pollack 2013).

If these voices are indeed robust indicators of a principal change in the direction of US and global policies, as some scholars – perhaps too optimistically – claim, then they would reflect a profound replacement of existing norms of appropriateness and the beginning of a new ‘norm life cycle’ of non-securitized domestic and international policies with regards to narcotics. In other words, in the terminology of securitization theory, the organized crime discourse with regard to narcotics that had stabilized as securitized international cooperation through multiple local translations would have been successfully desecuritized, at least temporarily.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to reconstruct the emergence, spread and temporary international stabilization of organized crime as a securitized narrative and practice and to thereby conceptualize and explore these processes through the lenses of securitization and translation. Organized crime as a securitized practice and temporarily established international norm evolved gradually through the processes of travelling and translation. From a diffuse cultural narrative, it turned into a political and eventually securitized US national discourse, which then spread to other perceived consumer and producer states as well as various global, regional and national institutions and initiatives. Although powerful securitizing speech acts and single political initiatives by political leaders, particularly in the USA, could be clearly identified and given relevance, it would be insufficient to focus on this aspect alone. Securitizing moves and their social and political effects differed in substance and effect, and they happened on a continuous, gradually transforming basis. They were the product of multiple iterations reconfiguring existing narratives and thereby (re)connecting different forms of agency in different settings. These ambivalent and contradictory processes combined, heavily interspersed with distinct local operational logics and thus translated differently in different places and at different times, allowed stabilized securitized international cooperation with regard to organized crime. As I hope to have illustrated in this chapter, the constitution of organized crime as a securitized international discourse has been created and is still held together by these power-laden yet ambivalent encounters as well as the constitutive processes of translation within and between them.

Notes

- 1 In line with the philosophy of language in the tradition of Austin, Wittgenstein and Searle, the Copenhagen School argue that by saying something, speakers inevitably create what Searle would call ‘institutional facts’ (Searle 2010, 8–10). From this perspective, the discursive establishment of something as a matter of security constitutes it as an ‘institutional fact’ which differs from ‘brute facts’ such as the physical existence

- of something, as it needs human institutions as well as human agreement and recognition for its existence. Specifically, securitization gives objects or people a status of '(national) security' and with that status a function that it cannot perform without the discursive establishment and collective recognition of that status.
- 2 At least this is what Yergin's (1977) prominent study on this topic suggests. For alternative readings of the various complexities and ambivalences of post-World War II US security discourse, see, for example, Bowie and Immerman (1998); Dockrill (1996); Hogan (1998); Gaddis (2005).
 - 3 For example, in the USA before the 1940s, 'reasons of state' combined with sovereign immunity meant that any state document could be deemed secret. With the passing of the Federal Tort Claims Act of 1946 US citizens then gained the right to sue the state, yet with the National Security Act of 1947 the state limited its general state secrets privilege to security issues, so that 'reasons of national security' limited citizens' access.
 - 4 Social anthropologists such as Henner Hess (1973) also use the term *cosche* or *cosca* to describe these loose associations of the early Sicilian mafiosi. This image of the Mafia as, essentially, Sicilism is famously represented in the Italian opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Pietro Mascagni in 1890, which was also prominently referred to in *The Godfather – Part III* by Francis Ford Coppola. In the central scene towards the end of the film, a Mafia killer launches an attack on Don Michael Corleone while he is watching his son performing the Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* in the Teatro Massimo in Palermo. However, these anthropological interpretations of the origins of Mafia narratives have recently been challenged by Mafia historians such as Salvatore Lupo (2002) or John Dickie (2008), especially in light of the Falcone investigations of the early 1990s (see Lupo 2002, 7–41; Dickie 2008, 86–96). Lupo and Dickie argue, instead, that the concept of Mafia has its origin in the (popular) cultural and political usages of the nineteenth century. In this context, they specifically refer to narratives of the Mafia as a hierarchical criminal organization that has also been related to the emergence of the Camorra in Campania (Saviano 2011).
 - 5 This ambiguity is partly due to the vagueness in the concept of national security that the Copenhagen School draws upon. While the National Security Act of 1947 clearly militarized the relationship between the USA and the Soviet Union under Truman, national security can be and has been practised very differently. This is not only true for countries with a distinctly 'civilian' foreign policy tradition such as Germany, Japan or Sweden but also for the USA itself. As Freiburg (2013, 48–94) illustrates, arguably Truman but certainly Eisenhower and Dulles clearly thought of national security in more comprehensive terms than mere survival, simple self-preservation or excessive militarization (see also Stritzel and Vuori 2016, 47–50).
 - 6 A decertification process was prominently utilized against Colombia between 1996 and 1997 as the Clinton Administration was dissatisfied with Colombia's national efforts in battling narcotics (Vasquez 2003).
 - 7 In Bolivia, Colombia and Mexico the USA offered extensive Special Forces training to the national counter-narcotics police forces, provided substantial financial backing to paramilitary counter-drug units typically commanded by national military officers, and provided comprehensive military equipment and vehicles for related activities (Benneyworth 2016). For example, as part of 'Plan Colombia' alone the USA increased their foreign aid for Colombia to \$1.3 billion in 2000.

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Part II

Instruments



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4 Translating the glucometer – from ‘Western’ markets to Uganda

Glucometer graveyards, missing
testing strips and the difficulties
of patient care

Arlena S. Liggins and Uli Beisel

Introduction

This chapter is about a disease that has long been thought of as being a disease of the wealthy; a disease that is chronic in nature; a disease which can be managed but not cured. And this chapter is about a technological instrument, a glucometer, the first-choice technology when it comes to testing and diagnosing diabetes in Uganda. While diabetes has long been seen as a disease of the so-called ‘minority world’, infectious diseases were commonly attributed to the ‘majority world’. However, what we face today is a situation in which especially people in the majority world have to tackle both: chronic, life-long diseases as well as infectious diseases. The days in which HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis were the major killers in Uganda (and elsewhere) seem to have passed. Against the odds this shift has not led to a decrease of global interest in these matters but the contrary is the case: the global market for the so-called ‘Big Three’, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, is flourishing as ever (Cohen 2006). New assemblages of actors including private-public partnerships as well as international organizations have (re-)gained importance and influence. This has not only moved global health from a neglected issue to a prominent topic in global politics, but also created a highly complex and heterogeneous field in which concerns about public health, international relations and development are brought together. And yet the widely spread global health claims of dramatically increasing numbers of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, seemingly cut across the actions taken to tackle chronic diseases.

And though this chapter neither aims to discuss prioritizations within global health, nor to picture diabetes and its manifestations in Uganda in general, we do aim to show how a medical instrument like the glucometer can be translated and adapted to a setting like Uganda. A setting for which it was not designed and produced initially and yet it often offers the only chance and possibility to detect and diagnose diabetes especially in governmental health care facilities. As this technology is mainly designed and produced for (self-)testing purposes in Europe, the US and Asia, it is also these privatized and well-funded markets that inscribe and describe these technologies. We look at the translation(s) and their betrayals

(often called failures) when introducing a technology such as the glucometer to an African health system where a small instrument – thought to facilitate self-monitoring practices in Western contexts – is responsible for diagnosing and testing patients of a whole health centre in other contexts like Uganda. A small instrument that, when implemented in an unprepared and impoverished health system, may evoke irritation rather than facilitation. This chapter aims to show how the introduction and translation of global health technologies for a disease like diabetes may only slowly contribute to the development of novel infrastructural and political engagements on the ground. Looking through the conceptual lens of translation will help us to challenge more conventional notions of technology transfer and social engineering but also enable us to relate these processes to aspects of (un)changing institutions and broader questions of social (dis)order.

The chapter will take three assumptions made by designers and producers of the glucometer as a starting point to see to what extent they hold true in Uganda: that the glucometer is a diagnostic instrument used for everyday regular self-monitoring; secondly that it is making the life of patients easier; and thirdly that it is not used for the primary clinical diagnosis of diabetes. We will see that using and/or owning a glucometer in Uganda might not suffice to satisfy any of these assumptions. Instead of facilitating the life of a diabetes patient, the new instrument might make it more confusing and, in some cases, make it even harder.

Translation

Technological instruments have in common that they have a purpose, an intended use. They have been designed and created for a very specific goal, sometimes for a predefined group of people and they never stand alone but instead involve a chain of networks including people, other technologies, etc. that are required to get them working and to keep them going. Technological instruments have to be embedded in a set of political, social and cultural predispositions in order for them to fulfil their duty. And at times this intentioned duty or purpose may fail or simply change, it diverges into a new technology (Akrich 1992, 205). The concept of technology insinuates that instruments of all sorts have to be enabled in the first place. Enabling is however not restricted to technological artefacts, but involves the organizational and institutional structures to which these instruments may be connected and in which they are meant to be embedded, as well as the epistemic and normative suppositions they entail. Nonetheless technology also relates to those human beings who put them to use, who do something with them, who live and interact with them in their daily life. Technology is never a passive tool but a constituent part of networks tying human as well as non-human actors together.

In line with Michel Callon's 'sociology of translation' (Callon 1986) we understand translation as a process of shifting an ontologically different element into a stable network, a net of arrangements. When technologies, or medical instruments for that matter, travel, new institutional engagements might have to

be made in order to cope with the impact of the instrument and to keep it going, to keep it stable or to make it stable again. As Callon points out, human and non-human actors are not only individual entities, but they also comprise a whole set of different networks involving institutional realities as well as (infrastructural) materialities. They move back and forth between technological, social, as well as cultural realities and ontologies. Callon specifies that actors are not conceived of as individual human beings, but are combined in a network of discourses, institutional and material infrastructures, technologies, policies and their implementation, standardizations and so on. All of them together influence the way in which the world is and can be seen by humans, and further control but also secure the way we behave and think. In order to move into a new context, to get adapted, a travelling medical instrument must be translated. We subscribe to the assumption that travelling will change the reality of the technology; it will influence the context and its actors (Macamo and Neubert 2008). The assumption that in the first place the technology is sent to travel is implicitly, sometimes explicitly, nurtured by the assumption that it will be adapted to the new context, that the actors will embrace the technology and tap into its use. Anthropological approaches to this very moment of adaptation, to the 'local' ways of using a technology foreign to the receiving context, can be found in studies and debates on appropriation (Hahn 2008; Spittler 2002; Beck 2001). The process of adaptation and translation involves a dismantling of things one moment and rebuilding and reconfiguring them the next and thus creating new ways of using the technology.

However, not only do the subjects and contexts change, the instrument that travels can also change and be fluid (Mol and de Laet 2000). In some ways, the glucometer is an 'immutable mobile' in the way Latour considered it: it is a truly global diagnostic instrument that enables the gathering of scientific data to move while the results stay the same. In other words, it enables the standardization of diagnosis. However, that is the theory; the realities of the glucometer in use are more complex. As we will show in this chapter, the glucometer can be understood as a fluid technology (*ibid.*), as it transforms from an instrument designed for patients to self-monitor into a means of primary diagnosis of diabetes in Uganda. While the materiality of the instrument stays the same, the translation nevertheless brings about a different glucometer (see Conclusion this volume). While this difference, or transformation, can be read as a good thing, since more patients can be diagnosed with diabetes in Uganda's impoverished health system, the creative adaptation of the instrument is also tricky and ambivalent. If the patient is only tested with the glucometer, the risk of false diagnoses due to the error-proneness of some glucometers might increase (Klonoff and Prahald 2015). Further, testing strips are a scarce commodity, even in hospitals, and so more often than not the glucometer is not useable for primary diagnosis of diabetes in Uganda's health system. This means the fluidity of the glucometer is indeed not a straightforward good, as its designers might have imagined, but rather is an ambivalent achievement (Beisel and Schneider 2012). Therefore, as we suggest in our conclusion, one needs to complement a focus on translation with a focus on care. Even the transfer of the best technology will not fix conditions of

care in ailing health systems. Caring for diabetes patients in Uganda requires the glucometer to be used creatively, to be translated in the various ways we document below. But it also means the glucometer itself needs to be seen as a fluid technology of care, not of patient choice (Mol 2008). While in a capitalist logic of patient choice, the availability of glucometers would be seen as sufficient, we follow Mol and suggest we must carefully analyse the practices of use and dis-use of the glucometer in order to transform it into a technology of care, a diagnostic instrument that helps improve patients' lives: a technology of care that does not just end up in the glucometer graveyard in hospital cabinets and patients' homes, but a technology that actually functions and is adjusted to the everyday needs of both the Ugandan health system and patients' lives.

(Lacking) policies and standards

Diagnostic evidence is, among other things, a tool to inform (political) action. 'Not documented is not done', as health workers we interviewed tended to say in Uganda. If there is no evidence in the form of numbers written in documents, it is simply not there. One big problem we encountered in Uganda was the lack of policies and guidelines when it comes to dealing with chronic diseases as opposed to the extensive documentation of cases of, for instance, malaria or HIV that has led to the need to formulate policies that facilitate action taken to prevent, treat and generally deal with the disease in the health care setting from an early stage; a process accelerated by the international pressure to generate data. As a member of the Ministry of Health put it, numbers and data facilitate the attracting of resources because (international) donors as well as the government will not be interested in helping or putting efforts into fighting a condition, which, on paper, is non-existent or hardly visible. It is this circumstance that has made others call diabetes the 'real neglected tropical disease' (Hsu and Potter 2014; Reynolds Whyte 2014) in spite of the fact that the World Health Organization has called upon the world leaders to develop national non-communicable disease (NCD) responses several times in the past already.¹ In Uganda, there has recently been a national survey to assess the burden of NCDs, which in turn has led to the formulation of new policies and strategic plans that are supposed to be used by all actors involved to lower the burden of diabetes and other non-communicable diseases. Nevertheless, the implementation of these policies is to date stagnant 'due to mostly money, but also due to internal controversies' as a member of the Ministry of Health explained. Diabetes is still a disease of unequal preconditions in relation to funding available, research conducted, global attention, etc. compared to HIV, even though HIV has itself become a chronic disease and many of the implemented policies in place for this condition could be transferred or adapted to diabetes and other chronic conditions.

As hinted at before, global health has regained prominence. One consequence of the blossoming of global health can be observed in a major push to implement (new) medical technologies. Rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) for the diagnosis of malaria are one prominent example. As small point-of-care

instruments – supposedly easy to use and easy to handle, being mobile and delivering quick results – RDTs ‘bring evidence-based diagnosis and therapy closer to the homes of people living in remote areas where basic public health services are not available’ allegedly accompanied by an improvement in access to care (Umlauf and Beisel 2016). Whereas RDTs were originally designed and produced outside the setting of implementation (though this does not necessarily hold true any longer as RDTs are being produced, for example in India, where they are also used) they were nevertheless produced for a very specific setting – malaria endemic and impoverished countries. This stands in contrast to diabetes, which is a disease that is not limited to a certain geographic area but is prevalent globally. Therefore, the glucometer offers us a field of investigation in which a supposedly ‘established’ technology in one setting (the ‘Global North’) has been transferred to a new location with stark differences to the setting of its creation (the ‘Global South’).

When the first glucometer was developed and came on the market more than 40 years ago, it meant a major breakthrough for the ease of self-monitoring for diabetes patients in the Western world. Initially too big and too expensive to use it other than in doctors’ offices, over the years the glucometer became widely available, a lot smaller in size, easier to use and to handle until it was as small as it is today – it can conveniently be put in a small bag or one’s trouser pockets, it is mobile and has the characteristic of a gadget, which you will not find missing in the home of any diabetes patient: ready to use anytime, anywhere with stunningly quick results (in often less than ten seconds, a glucometer will spit out a number indicating the level of blood glucose), allowing continuous checks and surveillance of one’s physical condition.

If we look at the global market, there is an abundance of different glucometers available. Though they all look slightly different, they all do, or should do, the same thing and are commonly used for one thing: to monitor the glucose level in everyday life (Mol 2000). The producers compete with each other with new functions, new designs, better handling, cheaper models, etc. At least this is the case in the minority world. In Uganda, however, there are not hundreds of different glucometers available, in other words the access to the global market is restricted. What does this mean for the people in Uganda who suffer from diabetes and are in need of a glucometer to monitor their glucose levels?

A biotechnologist linked the technological situation for glucometers in Uganda to the lack of standardization, stating that:

because of the global trends, the manufacturers set the trends and therefore it is not uncommon to find that many of the developing countries will end up with the highest standard technology. Because the way these people are marketing technology now is that for them they come, pick a model and when they want to change, they change and then say, this is now obsolete we cannot support it, there are no spares. So indirectly they force you to move to the new generation. And this is one reason for all these mismatches, because of the lack of standardization and regulation within the Ugandan

health care system. Further the missing policies that are there in draft form, but still have to be implemented. But they cannot be implemented because there is no money in this area and without money no implementation, because the implantation requires people to be trained, without money, no training.

Technologies are made to facilitate care or to make care possible in the best way. They will have to be brought to work by the actors and they will have to know how to use the technology. It has to be guaranteed that the necessary supplies will be available all the time since otherwise even the highest standard and up-to-date technology cannot be used and is of no use. Or as one doctor put it:

[Y]ou have a very nice glucometer, but you cannot use it because you do not have any strips and the government will refuse to buy [them]. They will simply say that one [the glucometer] we do not know. So you go a whole year, negotiate with them, but now they [the innovators] have something new. Those are some of the challenges. You can find good equipment in Uganda, but you might not be able to use them because of a lack of supplies.

In the case of Uganda the abundance of (obsolete) glucometers is the government's way of withdrawing from responsibility for the situation, a situation that might be alleviated by a standardization of glucometers. However, in Uganda the procurement law generally does not permit the specification of particular brands, and until this is possible, it is impossible to standardize. And, if you cannot standardize, it 'becomes a nightmare to look for the spares, to look for the reagents and the supplies in general', the biotechnologist reasoned.

In fact, during fieldwork we counted the number of different kinds of glucometers circulating in the main three hospitals visited, 19 different brands to be precise, though the National Medical Stores (NMS) responsible for the procurement and provision of medicines and other supplies only procures the equipment for one supplier (if at all). On the one hand the uncontrolled influx of glucometers gives freedom of choice, but what can often be observed is that though there might be a great number of glucometers in the country, many of these small diagnostic instruments are obsolete, not in use or malfunctioning. And even though many pharmacies offer glucometers, it is not guaranteed that they will be able to provide the matching strips the instrument needs in order to work. On the other hand, the availability of numerous kinds of glucometers presents a problem of compatibility – too many different brands circulating in the country leads to the problem of procuring the spares needed in order to maintain all these different types and brands of glucometer.

Translating the glucometer

As we are placing the glucometer at the centre of our inquiry, we will start with the basics: every glucometer comes with a user manual and it is this user manual

that gives us some clues about the intended use behind the glucometer, a background against which it can be translated and contested. As Law states,

to translate is to make two words equivalent. But since no two words are equivalent, translation also implies betrayal It is about moving [things] around, about linking and changing them. In short, translation is always insecure, a process susceptible to failure. Disorder – or other orders – are only precariously kept at bay.

(Law 2007, 5)

When a glucometer is purchased, it is delivered in a small cardboard box that protects the instrument and the supplies that come with it. Usually a ‘starter-box’ provides the glucometer, some lancets (for pricking the finger or another appropriate part of the body to get a drip of blood), around ten glucose strips on which a drop of blood has to be applied so that the machine can start measuring the amount of glucose in the blood. Each box is also delivered with a manual that offers technical and practical information about the instrument. When you open the user manual (there are sometimes slight differences between the manuals, and especially the content may vary), you are first welcomed and congratulated on the successful purchase of a great glucometer assuring you that you have made the best deal imaginable. While reading through the manual you are consistently addressed personally with personal pronouns such as ‘you’ or ‘your’, making you feel personally spoken to and involved. And then, as you continue to read, and as you manoeuvre your way through the – at times 88-page – user manual, you learn about everything the meter can do (for example, store the results for a given time span making it unnecessary to document the numbers and of course measure your blood glucose); how it is supposed to be handled (you should handle it with care, and never store it in extreme heat or extreme cold since if you do so there is no guarantee it will give accurate results), how you should clean it (you should never let water or even alcohol flow into the strip slot and you should clean it on a regular basis), how it is to be used (you have to make sure the battery is functioning and then you have to press the on-off button and insert an unused glucose strip every time you test yourself), how you should interpret the results (always in cooperation with medical personnel) and so on. And though it is never mentioned explicitly you may assume that all this information is given on the assumption that first of all you, as the purchaser of the glucometer, are literate and have purchased a meter in your home country so that you can understand the manual (in the case of Uganda, though the official language is English not everyone is able to read and understand English) and, most importantly, you have bought the glucometer on the understanding that you have access to everything necessary for the glucometer to function effectively in the course of time (new batteries if they are dead, more glucose strips when they get finished, etc.), and therefore it can be put to use in a setting in which it can function exactly as intended.

In the remainder of the chapter we discuss three aspects that all the manuals we found in Uganda (we actually did not find the manuals, just the glucometers,

but the manuals can be found online) include when informing you about the glucometer: what the glucometer is intended to do, how it does it and how the user in Uganda interprets the information given, bearing in mind that not every user reads the manual in the first place and acknowledging the fact that there is no such thing as an 'ordinary' user.

The glucometer for the daily monitoring of your blood glucose level

The glucometer has been designed to make the self-monitoring practices of diabetes patients easier. Determining the blood glucose level several times a day allows an individual and her or his doctor to adjust the treatment to the patient's individual needs by either prescribing medication and/or seeing and understanding fluctuations of glucose levels during the day and relating these to the food that was eaten or the level of physical activity the individual engaged in. The daily use of the glucometer makes it possible to prevent harmful situations arising from too high or too low glucose levels (Kirk and Stegner 2010).

And the following is what one health worker at a small diabetes clinic teaches her patients in her diabetes clinic in Uganda, whether they have a glucometer or not. It is important, she said, that they are taught about the importance of 'knowing their status'. While the patients without a glucometer 'do not bother too much' about it, the nurse explained that

self-monitoring of course is one of the topics we teach. When you are self-monitoring, definitely you are better off compared to the one who is waiting for a month or two months to come to be tested for their glucose level. Because if you do not test yourself, you don't know what is happening. But when you have a glucometer [and] if you are self-monitoring you will know that now you are in this or that state and manage yourself according to the teachings. So that is what they do, those who have glucometers.

Nevertheless, the nurse was aware that only a few, in fact the minority, of her patients at the hospital own a glucometer to monitor the glucose levels and that even if a patient has the instrument, this does not mean that regular monitoring let alone daily testing is her or his day-to-day practice. Many patients confirmed that due to the scarcity of resources it made more sense for a diabetes patient to measure the glucose level whenever she or he was feeling bad rather than measuring the glucose level in situations in which the patient actually felt comfortable.

I only test myself when I feel bad, when my heart beats so fast or when I feel too weak and feverish. That is the moment when I test myself to see if it [the glucose level] is high or low. And if it is too high or if it is too low, we are advised to go to the health centre immediately because otherwise we might just fall down and die just like that.

Instead of using the glucometer as a preventive tool, namely to avoid any critical medical situation that might have gone unnoticed without measuring, the glucometer functions as a confirmatory tool, as an instrument to confirm the known.

Another patient who owned a glucometer said that he would only test when he knew that he had an appointment one month later and not when he knew he would be seeing the nurse soon:

If I know that maybe in this week I will go to the doctor, I do not need to test myself because they will do that in the hospital. But if I know that I will not go there I test myself at least thrice in a month and if I find that my results are not scary and would not require me to test myself from time to time, there is no need to test.

The glucose strips in particular need to be handled with great care in the sense that they should be used sparingly as it is always uncertain when and where an individual will be able to buy another tin of strips for economic reasons and because the availability of these strips in the pharmacies cannot be guaranteed. One nurse was willing to be flexible about the number of times a patient was testing when she or he had an instrument for home use because

due to of the economy of the country, we know that the patients cannot test as often as we recommend. Because you know each strip only works once and then you discard. So even though we prefer them to test pre-breakfast, pre-lunch or pre-supper and then at bedtime and this actually on a daily basis, we are glad if they test even once a day. Because of the economy and the test strips being costly you find people testing when they don't feel well. But if the equipment and the money was there, they should be testing at least three or four times a day.

And then there were also a few patients who, despite the fact that they owned a glucometer, preferred to be tested in the hospital as it was rather complicated to understand and interpret the numbers correctly all the time. As one patient said,

I prefer to test myself from the hospital. Okay you can test from home, but still it is risky, because you might check yourself from home and assume that you are fine, because you do not understand the numbers correctly.

The glucometer in Uganda does not always function as a tool to monitor the glucose level regularly but rather, if anything at all, functions as a confirmatory tool. Instead of acting as a diagnostic instrument for home use, many patients preferred being tested in the hospitals, sharing the responsibility for their chronic condition. Using the glucometer for the daily monitoring of the blood glucose level is often not sustainable in Uganda, instead the glucometer is then used when a patient feels unwell or in cases where the readings had been worrying.

Nevertheless, the basic prerequisite for any application of the glucometer is the availability of the testing strips.

Designed to make your life easier

Governmental health care services are free in Uganda. Yet, everyday practice has shown that in fact the services are not free all the time, especially when it comes to diabetes. Stock-outs of medicines are one reason why patients might have to go to a private pharmacy to purchase the vital medications with their own means. As diabetes is a chronic disease and the medication has to be taken on a regular basis to survive, stock-outs for the relevant medicines can become life threatening if an individual is not able to purchase the essential medicines. Therefore, receiving the diagnosis of diabetes often ends up being a heavy economic burden for the individuals and their families; here a comparison with HIV is interesting, where international donors fund a lot of the medications and tests, although reliable provision is not guaranteed here either (Park 2015).

But it is not merely the medicine that comes with hidden costs. The availability of diagnostic technology is not necessarily guaranteed for diabetes. Often, even if the glucometer is available, the strips are not and a test cannot be performed, which may mean many diabetics are undiagnosed, and consequently untested and not monitored. Sometimes testing strips are available, but the batteries have died; or the glucometer shows an error, which cannot be rectified (often because the manuals that come with the meter are discarded as soon as they arrive). Some glucometers are brought into the country by foreigners who want to help or they are brought back in the luggage of Ugandans who have travelled abroad for themselves or a relative as a gift. And some glucometers come from the government or from unknown sources. And often it seems not to matter as long as the glucometers are there and functioning.

The problem with the massive influx of technology is not that the glucometers are there, but their lack of compatibility. Glucometers from one brand can only be used with the strips of the same brand. This means that the well-intentioned presents from abroad are useless as soon as the strips are finished, as in most cases it is not possible to replace them. The technology becomes useless. In many health facilities we saw whole collections of unused and discarded glucometers: glucometer graveyards of different brands, in different colors, different sizes and meters needing different strips. As a result, a technology that was designed and produced to make life easier for people suffering from diabetes, to facilitate self-testing and self-monitoring, was sometimes not making life easier at all.

In a country like Germany it is easy to get a free meter as a promotion from one of the drug companies. In Uganda, it is not easy or even possible to get a free meter. In Germany, you can order the strips for your meters online, you can even place a repeat order, meaning strips are sent to you on a regular basis, this is not possible in Uganda. In Germany, patients are supported by their health insurance, in Uganda hardly anybody has health insurance. In Uganda patients can test themselves when they feel sick to confirm their status, in Germany part of the

self-monitoring entails self-testing several times per day. But with a single strip costing up to three dollars, in Uganda it is an expensive undertaking to test several times per day.

'Designed to make your life easier' – one of the promises the glucometer made to the user. 'Making your life easier' with a high-quality medical instrument that delivers the results fast, is easy to handle and, most important, is the everyday guidance to oversee and monitor the blood glucose levels. Inevitably the question arises 'easier than what?' or 'easier as compared to when?'. Many of the diabetes patients who own a glucometer in Uganda have only recently started using it outside the hospital setting. And by talking to some of these patients, you may wonder whether their life is actually made easier by using the glucometer, at times the opposite is the case as now they 'have to worry about another thing' by taking care of a medical instrument, which requires expensive supplies frequently. In fact, many said that their life had been easier without the glucometer, as then the responsibility for testing lay with the professionals and not with them. Further it was easier simply because they 'didn't have to look at the meter laying in the shelf unused because the money is not there to buy the strips or batteries', a patient explained. What was intended to make the life of a diabetes patient easier may have the opposite effect in Uganda (and elsewhere): not only is there the pressure of using and interpreting the numbers, and continuously worrying about the availability of spare parts such as strips or batteries, but also the psychological pressure the glucometer may exert when a patient sees the meter lying unused.

The glucometer should not be used for the diagnosis of diabetes

In addition to all the things the glucometer can allegedly do, the manual also informs you about what it cannot do, namely what it should not be used for: the diagnosis of diabetes. When thinking of a medical technology we might envisage a procedure, a (diagnostic) procedure that entails asking questions, taking the anamnesis of a patient, etc. We should give more thought to a technology in the sense of a diagnostic instrument which is able to facilitate a diagnosis, an instrument which makes the invisible (within the body) visible (on a display), indicated in form of a colour (blue is negative, pink positive), two bars mean positive, one bar negative and so on. Medical instruments have in common that they (should) facilitate diagnosis, or that they are the basal means to come to a diagnosis. They can bring to the fore what would not be possible without them. In fact, there are few medical instruments that are not made to assist diagnosis.

In Uganda, as mentioned before, the glucometer is the first-choice technology when it comes to precisely this moment in the medical encounter between patient and doctor, the diagnosis of diabetes in governmental facilities. Or rather it is not a technology of choice but simply the only thing available in order to uncover and then deal with diabetes. In the minority world, it is common practice to use blood tests to confirm the diagnosis of diabetes by drawing blood and then sending the sample to a laboratory for analysis. And while the glucometer in these settings is used to get first clues and indicators about the level of glucose

in one's blood, a laboratory analysis of blood is needed to ensure that the test results are accurate. And it is in these settings in which glucose-measuring instruments are perceived not to be accurate enough to be used for diagnosis (NIDDK 2016). And although it is always stated clearly in the user manual that the instrument is 'not made for diagnosis', that is exactly what the glucometer does in Uganda: it diagnoses.

Samuel is a 27-year-old diabetes patient who owns a glucometer and, compared to many glucometer owners in Uganda, is able to use it on a fairly regular basis. But he stumbled on the information 'not for diagnosis' when he read the manual of his new glucometer for the first time: 'There is this warning on that glucometer to not use it for diagnosis', he said. His explanation for why this warning was indicated was not related to the possibility of the instrument giving inaccurate results, but instead to the fact that a patient was not capable of making diagnoses as this lay in the hands of medical professionals:

We are not medical personnel and being diabetic and buying a glucometer does not make me a doctor. Anybody can buy the glucometer. So it does not mean that a random person goes and buys a glucometer and can diagnose anybody without consulting a doctor.

And indeed it was easy to understand why a patient wondered why a glucometer was used at all if it was not made for diagnosis. A laboratory technician working in a private lab, where they do not use glucometers but perform blood analyses to diagnose diabetes, had also not heard about this before. When we met him in his laboratory in Kampala, Uganda's capital, he said in a tone of wonder: 'Oh my God. But so many people are using it. So what is it [the glucometer] for if it is not for diagnosis?' He wondered why it was permissible to use a technology for a purpose that it was not designed for. In his eyes it was the responsibility of the Ministry of Health to ensure that every individual in Uganda had the best care and treatment available. 'And if we are not giving them the best because we think it is too expensive, then we are killing them earlier than they should have died', he continued. But we were wondering together if in the end it was not better to use the glucometer to diagnose diabetes than not to diagnose it at all. Was the knowledge that the glucometer made errors, combined with the uncertainty of whether the instrument was giving accurate results, a reason not to use it? The laboratory technician, however, came to the conclusion that,

[I]t is not okay to use the machine. We might think it is cheap but at times it is turning our lives upside down and it is costing our lives. People are going to die because we misdiagnose them with a technology that is not made for this purpose. In most health facilities you will find the same machine they used two or three years ago. That cannot be true. Even a car you have to service. Every machine has to be serviced. As I told you earlier you are not sure whether what you are giving is right because you do not have any measures that are put in place to know if yesterday the machine was right,

what makes you think the machine is right today? How sure can you be that after one year the machine, which has not been serviced because there is nothing like servicing it, is still working?

But there was one governmental hospital that did not use the glucometer for diagnosis currently, because they were not diagnosing diabetes at all. They had been waiting for a new glucometer to be delivered by NMS for a year. The paradox of the situation, however, was that this hospital had in fact got five glucometers in their building and even one tin of strips, but none of the components matched, rendering the instruments obsolete. 'But we are not throwing them away, we are keeping them as flowers', one of the laboratory technicians said. He was hoping that there would be strips for at least one of these machines at some point, either they would be found somewhere in a private pharmacy, perhaps in the capital Kampala, or NMS would in the end deliver some strips that were compatible with the instruments. However, talking to an employee of NMS it became clear that all the brands of glucometers that were lying unused in the storage room of this health facility would be laying there for a lot longer, and that in the end they would be discarded anyway. Although the laboratory manager was repeatedly ordering the strips via the internal ordering form of NMS we found out that the strips were no longer produced, as there were several newer models on the market. They needed a new glucometer, a sixth one 'to broaden the collection' as the health worker commented.

So when patients came to the hospital to be tested for diabetes, they had to be referred to nearby private facilities, where they in turn would request money for the test, using a glucometer to give the diagnosis and send the patients back to the hospital with the non-functioning glucometer. The glucometer has the freedom to travel around the country from other countries without hindrance, you may find hospitals where there are several meters which are not in use any more and you will find other hospitals that are using this technology to diagnose diabetes. The glucometer thus does both in Uganda, it diagnoses (where it can) and it sometimes does not diagnose (where it cannot).

Conclusion

In the sections above we have complicated three assumptions that are made about the glucometer by its designers and producers, namely: that the glucometer is a diagnostic instrument used for everyday regular self-monitoring; secondly that it is making the life of its user easier; and thirdly that it is not used for the primary clinical diagnosis of diabetes. As we have seen, none of these assumptions or practices inscribed into the technological instrument is that straightforward in Uganda. Firstly, even if patients want to self-monitor regularly or even several times a day, they are often not able to, as they cannot afford the necessary amount of testing strips. Secondly, owning a glucometer presents most patients in Uganda with a burden, first and foremost the financial and organizational burden of maintenance. Also, the glucometer brings with it the burden of care, instead

of being the responsibility of the health professionals it becomes the burden of the patients to not only interpret the numbers, but also to decide if their test result requires action and if so what kind of action is needed (medication, a visit to the health clinic, etc.). For patients who are economically deprived and pressured, as well as those who have had little education, this is a real challenge. Thirdly, we have shown that although they are designed for self-monitoring, in conditions of scarcity the glucometer is regularly used in health centres and clinics as a technology to establish an initial diagnosis of diabetes. These three adaptations show that bringing the glucometer to Uganda is not a mere act of technology transfer or implementation. It rather needs to be actively translated into a new setting: a health care system that is characterized by scarcity, stock-outs and, sometimes, erratic decision-making. The meeting of the fast-moving, well-resourced, capitalist health care market with the impoverished health care system in Uganda results not only in creative adaptations (such as the use of glucometers for diagnosis) and worse conditions of care for patients, but also in a cemetery of unused yet functional glucometers.

Indeed, this might lead us to the conclusion that fast-moving technologies, such as a glucometer, might not be the best technologies to use in Uganda, as the supply of equipment has to be guaranteed. It is not only about choices, it is more a question of decisions made by the authorities. If NMS do not want to buy the strips for a certain glucometer, they will simply refuse to do so and a glucometer that is already in a health centre – and is actually ready to use with people knowing how to use it – because of a lack of functioning batteries and lancets for pricking will be buried in the graveyard of glucometers.

The increased number of people suffering from diabetes (because the diagnostic possibilities have increased and are now available in more settings) calls for an adaptation of health care systems that are often not well prepared to deal with the heavy burden of these conditions economically, politically, technologically, etc. However, diabetes, in particular, is a disease that comes into being and that is enacted through technology. Without testing, there will be no diabetes, at least not on paper and not in any records. There might be patients feeling unwell, but no confirmed case of diabetes. Testing, and subsequently diagnosing, is an essential aspect of the classification of illness. But it is not the translation alone, it is also the prospect that using a technological instrument in the first place comes with benefits that cannot be taken for granted as we have seen. Further it is not simply enough to put a technological instrument, like the glucometer, to use. The instrument will do something, it will create something and, in the case of the glucometer, that is numbers, but it also requires someone who is able to interpret the numbers and who has the means at hand (financial, organizational, time-wise) to act upon its results.

Those are the aspects that the global markets surely do not take into consideration when they produce glucometers. And in the case of impoverished health systems, what they were intended to be used for in the beginning ends up being shifted from homes to the labs. Chronic diseases have common features concerning the level and need of care, the level of medical involvement and also the

personal lives, anxieties, hopes and whatever there might be. Getting the diagnosis of a chronic condition entails the certainty that life is uncertain and that it will never be the way it used to be; going to the health centre regularly, taking medication, having to get several diagnostic tests over and over again to test the sugar levels; ups and downs, moments of healthiness, moments of illness and moments of despair. And in Uganda a diagnostic instrument, instead of alleviating the uncertainties, contributes to new uncertainties.

Indeed a health policy will not be able to stem all these issues, but at least it can give a guideline of what to do when a person appears and turns out to be 'diabetes positive', to use the HIV language. However, the testing doesn't have just one outcome: if you measure your blood glucose, there will not be a positive or negative result, the glucometer will spit out a number which will tell you 'how positive' or 'how negative you are', because the numbers that appear will be attributed to certain ranges. This is especially important when it comes to the prescription of treatment, because it might be necessary to adapt the medication accordingly: higher or lower doses of insulin or oral hypoglycemic. But it is also important for each individual, since self-testing is supposed to be one big part of the treatment regimen. Self-testing helps the patient to monitor her or his glucose levels without having to go to an often far away health facility.

We should also think about what technological possibilities there are, especially today, when technology seems to be everywhere and seems to be able to manage almost anything, any disease, any condition. Why does that matter? It matters because a lack of choice necessarily will lead to a lack of possibilities and ways to manage the disease. And it influences the way in which the instrument can be translated. On the flipside, as we have seen – and as Annemarie Mol showed for diabetes in the Netherlands – more choice (e.g. in our case more brands and types of glucometers) will not necessarily lead to better treatment and disease management (Mol 2008). Indeed, it seems that good management is a matter of care and not merely technology – a matter of care that plays out differently in Uganda and the Netherlands, but certainly a matter of care. This chapter suggests that the translation of the glucometer from global markets to its various application contexts in Uganda shows that, analytically, we need to bring the study of translation together with studying care. In order to account for the differences translations produce, we need to attend to how people care for, struggle to care for or, indeed, are unable to care for the translated technological instrument. A successfully translated fluid technology requires care, it does not merely need to be sold, but entails creative adaptations in order not to end up in the glucometer graveyard.

Note

- 1 In 1989 the World Health Organization recognized diabetes as a global health issue at the 42nd World Health Assembly, Geneva, 8–19 May 1989.

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5 The promotion of Rule of Law in translation

Technologies of normative knowledge transfer in South Sudan's constitution making

Katrin Seidel¹

Introduction

After South Sudan declared its independence from Sudan on 9 July 2011, reports such as the following appeared in the international media: 'South Sudan fights to implement Rule of Law At the heart of this new battle are approximately 250 lawyers [who] have come back from abroad' (Voice of America, 5 November 2013). However, as this chapter will demonstrate, at the heart of the *Rule of Law* (RoL) battle there are also manifold international actors with their virtual toolboxes filled with modules and guidelines that South Sudanese actors are supposed to assemble into a so-called 'permanent' constitution under international guidance.

The emerging state of South Sudan has become a new arena of experimentation in which to test and establish RoL as part of the internationalized post-conflict (re-)construction (see May 2014b; Humphreys 2010; Costa and Zolo 2007; Carothers 1998, 95–106). This study takes a closer look at the 'realities' through the lens of constitution making. This approach becomes even more salient because reforms are cultivated through a commercialized 'professionalization of global politics . . . prompting the increasing deployment of the rule of law' (May 2014a, 75). Competing international RoL actors are eager to support war-torn countries' transition to 'modern democratic' states, a process in which constitution making plays a crucial role. International constitution-making assistance, guided by model constitutional frameworks, is primarily provided to governmental actors in the form of technical support, legal expertise and advisory services (Kendall 2013, 1–15). The services offered come with a range of international benchmarks and conflict-resolution mechanisms (Eriksson and Kostić 2013, 6; Sannerholm 2012, 103f; Humphreys 2010, 7ff; Kendall 2013, 9f), interwoven with layered premises and interests. Studies have shown that the more constitution making in war-torn settings relies on international funding, the greater are the inherent tensions between the different agendas and interests of external actors and the objectives of national actors. These tensions are accompanied by a mix of normative orders and political imperatives that have serious processual and substantive implications (Dann and Al-Ali 2006, 425ff). As a consequence, the '[p]ost-conflict states entrench the rule of law into their

constitutional frameworks in the hope of shoring up international legitimacy but also in the hope [that] over time [RoL] becomes fused with other prevailing and compatible local legal cultures' (Grenfell 2013, 13).

As this chapter will demonstrate, in the South Sudanese context the international prescriptions that are proffered and the undue pressure to follow them not only fail to achieve what they promise, but they even support what they want to avoid: 'a poor governance framework [and] entrenching societal divisions' (Ludsin 2011, 310). Accordingly, I will take a closer look at the prescriptions themselves. The toolboxes global governance institutions and international non-government institutions (INGOs) have brought into South Sudan are filled with guidelines, 'good and best practices' and 'project law' techniques. I want to demonstrate that in an inversion of proclaimed ideas of 'local ownership', the toolboxes seem to regulate South Sudan's constitution-making process in a way that reduces the chances of bringing together the diverse ideas of statehood that exist in the segmented society. Even though local actors are forced to negotiate within the highly contested international normative frames, it will also be shown that dominant local actors utilize the internationalized constitution-making process and the predefined frame of reference in the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan of 2011 (TCRSS) in ways that secure their own interests and positions.

In order to grasp these dynamics and to better understand how certain normative ideas – under the rubric of RoL – have become the driving force behind legal interventions, I have chosen *translation*² as the analytical lens: when analysing the making of constitutions, one must bear in mind the fact that law is always produced within a universe of plurality of co-existing and co-constituting normative orders, generated and used by complex constellations of actors (Benda-Beckmann, Benda-Beckmann and Eckert 2009). Moreover, since normative ideas travel around the globe, their contents are constantly being modified, and they in turn also change the institutional frames and legal cultures into which they are translated. An important part of translation is constructing a frame. Those frames are ways of packaging and presenting ideas that generate shared beliefs, motivate collective action and define appropriate strategies of action (Merry 2009, 266). Frames, therefore, are not only translated into new contexts, but they often also retain their underlying emphasis on certain legal notions embedded in the legal codes of the international law system. Framing goes along with transplantation. Transplants are models³ adapted from one local context to another, often in unexpected ways whereby each translation is part of a translation chain (Behrends, Sung-Joon and Rottenburg 2014; Rottenburg 2009a).

South Sudan's internationalized constitution making is part of the latest so-called wave of constitutionalism that has opened up political space for new experimentation (Akiba 2004, 9). Political experimentation leads to the tendency that

one first makes the intervention based on whatever foreknowledge is at hand and then generates the relevant data through the intervention itself while

paying attention to ‘lessons learned’ The belief is that those experimental projects can be measured, analysed and compared among different intervention zones.

(Rottenburg 2009b, 426)

This approach seems to be legitimized by ‘an assumed “state of exception”, a kind of emergency that does not allow [one] to wait for better or tested solutions’ (ibid., 425). In other words, ‘practice produces knowledge rather than knowledge informing practice’ (ibid., 431).

Before taking a closer look at translations of the RoL through the prism of the internationalized constitution-making experiment in South Sudan, a few words about the emerging state.

The emerging state of South Sudan as a Rule-of-Law experimentation arena

The Republic of South Sudan currently appears to be only slightly more than a geographical factum, as the ‘historical unity was one of convenience not of conviction’ (Jok 2012, 58). In a plebiscite (held in January 2011), the people were asked to vote either to remain with or secede from the Republic of Sudan. The overwhelming majority put their fingerprints on the open palm – the symbol of the secession option – in order to show their support for this historical figuration of ‘convenience’. This paved the way for the official declaration of independence. The option of seceding from Sudan as an act of self-determination was granted through the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (Art. 9(1), 11, 208(6, 7) ICSS), which was part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 (CPA) that sought to end the more than two-decade-long civil war between the north and the south of Sudan (see Grawert 2010; Johnson 2010; Wassara 2009).

In order to better grasp the ongoing constitution-making process in emerging South Sudan, one has to bear in mind that this process is entangled with state formation efforts. South Sudan was admitted into the club of sovereign states in July 2011 when the Secretary-General of the United Nations welcomed ‘South Sudan to the community of nations’ (Ki-moon 2013). Both internal and external actors put forward models to implement their own visions of a democratic state, sometimes masking their interests behind the assumed legitimacy of the apparently rational and superior models. In turn, the models and sometimes the interests become reshaped in the process. Not only was the CPA of 2005 shaped by international interventions (Dann and Al-Ali 2006: 442–449), but it also paved the way for a bunch of new models of constitution making. When complex historical developments resulted in the creation of the new state of South Sudan, it was, after all, not simply a repetition of a misconception about the relationship between a presumably homogeneous people – a nation – and its right to its own independent, sovereign state; it was also a reasonable hope that, under the given circumstances of the global political order, a democratic state with equal participatory rights for all citizens would offer the ‘best’ possible way

to deal with problems concerning the ever-changing and controversial common good, where diverging interests between social and economic positions, ethnic and religious affiliations and cultural orientations need to be negotiated in non-violent ways.

However, the reality of state formation shows that non-violent and violent political and military negotiations over South Sudan's modality of statehood are still ongoing,⁴ despite the joint peace and constitution-building efforts of many local, national, regional and international actors. Six years after South Sudan's declaration of independence, the political renegotiations focus again on 'peace' as well as on implementing the *de jure* established Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU). These ongoing violent power struggles between various South Sudanese political actors and military factions have already led to about 50,000 deaths, more than one million displaced people and a situation in which almost two-thirds of the population depend on external food aid (see UNHCR 2017, Weber 2016).

Despite all efforts to bring the warring factions back to the negotiating table, the latest Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCRSS) (which was negotiated and signed by the warring factions in August 2015 under pressure from the East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the international community), although officially still in place, has a very limited reach in times when military renegotiations are ongoing. This resolution modified the constitution-making approach that had been agreed upon earlier. In the amended roadmap, local ownership and comprehensive popular participation are expected to be the guiding principles (see ARCRSS 2015, Ch. VI). However, just a year after signing the peace agreement, the new country is again on the brink of civil war (Weber 2016).

The situation in emerging South Sudan reveals that no societal consensus on national values, the normative basis or political structure has yet been reached, nor is there agreement on what is perceived to be 'the common good' in light of the normative plurality. The manifold negotiation processes are not institutionalized as stable procedures within clearly outlined spaces of action among well-defined bodies of participating actors. Accordingly, to create the fiction of a 'nation-state', constitution making revolves around the construction of sovereignties in an attempt to control territorial borders, more clearly define an interior and convince people that this imagined interior does in fact exist (Anderson 1983, 6). Even though the country fulfilled the declarative international law requirements for a 'state', the ongoing devastating political and military (re-)negotiations reveal that the context for constructing internal sovereignty is not in place due to a lack of infrastructure, the danger of the resource curse, the militarization of society and fragmented authority structures (see Wassara 2015).

Constitution making in South Sudan needs to be seen as part of internationalized 'post-conflict (re-)construction' efforts and has become a crucial normative tool of state formation within the context of broader RoL frameworks. Thereby, not only the process of the constitution making itself, but also the already inscribed

constitutional law, has become a severe normative instrument. In other words, ‘the constitution becomes, or more precisely, is made a handmaiden of the party in power, as a means to the retention of power’, relating Yash Ghai’s (1972, 406) much earlier assessment on constitutions in general also to interim constitutional arrangements. In the following, attention will be drawn to the way diverse technologies of governance produce normativity and what effects those technologies have on the translation processes that circulating models undergo.

How can a constitution be produced from the international toolbox?

In 2012 the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) was constitutionally mandated to draft a ‘permanent’ constitution.⁵ In order to learn more about how the NCRC has negotiated a ‘supreme law of the land’ among the plurality of institutional actors and how the actors deal with the international technical assistance offered, over the course of last few years I had a number of conversations with the late A. M. Tier, who was the former chairperson of the NCRC. In 2015 the chairperson seemed to be upset with the ‘market place situation of the NCRC’, where multiple international actors advertise their products and ‘recipes’. By way of example, the chairperson mentioned, ‘recently UN women promoting gender equality knocked at my door. I told them, “No, not for South Sudan yet. We need to reach consensus on the building blocks of our constitution first”’ (Tier, 26 May 2015).

This comment illustrates that the multitude of different well-intentioned international offers can sometimes give local actors space to choose the one over the other. Despite the fact that gender equality is considered vital for shaping an institutional framework for a fair society, such moments of choice can perpetuate existing power relations. Patriarchal social structures and forms of authority are reproduced during the translation process. One can only speculate on how the chairperson hoped to reach consensus on the ‘building blocks’ of a constitution without taking the gender perspective into account. However, the example shows that the chairman of the NCRC found himself in the potentially difficult situation of having to balance and manage competing international actors and their well-intended offers.

Let us now turn to the translation dynamics of both the overall international frame and the instruments used to implement it.

Framing: Rule of Law as a key feature of experimentation

As mentioned above, South Sudan’s war-torn constitution-making process has opened up political space for new ‘experimental enterprises in real-time’ (Rottenburg 2009b, 425). In order to make the experimentation enterprise successful – to ensure that certain normative ideas become driving forces for legal interventions – it needs to be framed. The RoL can be identified as one of those frames – it has not only become ‘the dominant paradigm for state governance

in the international arena' (Grenfell 2013) and in war-torn settings a layer of conditionality, but also 'the *Grundnorm* of a new constitutionalism' (May 2014a, 63–76). It has become the 'basic grammar of constitutionalism',⁶ structuring the politico-legal discourse as well as the 'use of concepts like people, self-government, citizen, rights, equality, nation, and popular sovereignty' (Maldonado 2013, 1). This framing is assumed, for instance, in the 2012 UN Declaration on Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, which states that the United Nations (UN) is 'convinced that good governance at the international level is fundamental for strengthening the rule of law' (UN A/RES/68/116). Most RoL narratives are connected through the belief that RoL has universal qualities that make it stand apart 'as a non-ideological, even technical solution' (Carothers 1998, 99; Rajagopal 2008). Accordingly, RoL intrinsically defines appropriate strategies of action to implement the shared belief. For that it is necessary to 'socialise[s] elites and legislators into the *Rule of Law* mind-set' (May 2014a, 75), an exercise in which enormous normative transfers take place through, among other activities, constitution making and the establishment of institutions with state-making technologies and techniques (see Rajagopal 2008, 1347f; Kendall 2013, 9f).

Nowadays, governmental institutions have established all kinds of RoL-promoting institutions; what is more, almost all intergovernmental organizations have specialized branches for promoting RoL. The website of the UNDP branch for South Sudan, for example, echoed the *Grundnorm*.⁷ However, the huge gap between the promises and the actual effects of the manifold RoL promotion efforts has led to a degree of self-reflection at the UN level. For example, as early as 2004 the UN Report on the Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post Conflict stated:

Too often, the emphasis has been on foreign experts, foreign models and foreign-conceived solutions to the detriment of durable improvements and sustainable capacity. . . . We must learn better how to respect and support local ownership, local leadership.⁸

In recent years there has been a shift in the international conceptualization of RoL: consideration is now being given to the dynamics of legal pluralism (Grenfell 2013, 7) and to 'local ownership'. Accordingly, the catch-all concept of 'ownership' of a given project – widely understood as 'the extent to which domestic actors control both the design and implication of political processes' (Donais 2009, 5) – has emerged as a sub-frame within the debate on development assistance since the 1990s: 'The common people in post-conflict or war-torn societies are . . . expected to participate, to be consulted and have their say on the formulation of new constitutional frameworks . . . in order for the project to be successfully implemented' (Sannerholm 2012, 124). The contested concept of 'local ownership' (see Bargués-Pedreny 2015) includes, in the narrow sense, the national government and its institutions and, in the broader sense, a form of popular participation (Sannerholm 2012, 121–122). Thus, one understanding of a more participatory approach to constitution making entails not limiting 'stakeholders' to

state actors, but increasingly includes non-state (e.g., civil society, religious and/or 'traditional') actors as well. Critics point out that even though ownership has become the *sine qua non* for international involvement, it has not been translated into 'de facto self-determination or self-government' (Bargués-Pedreny 2015, 20) due to tensions between international regulations and local aspirations, as will be shown below.

International paternalism

The space for negotiating the production of the constitution is narrowed by project law techniques. Project law can be characterized as a vehicle for normative categories hidden in standardized planning concepts, management techniques and general models at both the project planning and implementing levels, with the ultimate goal of instigating social change (Weilenmann 2009; Benda-Beckmann et al. 2009). To illustrate the challenges of these techniques, let us take a closer look at South Sudan's project to develop a 'permanent' constitution.

The project design follows a four-stage constitution-making process according to an international standardized procedure. The supporting tools – the 'Guidance note on United Nations assistance to constitution-making processes' (United Nations 2009) and an attached template of the process to be followed – echo the international 'standard'. The negotiation forums were supposed to be the NCRC, followed by a National Constitutional Conference (NCC)⁹ and the South Sudan National Legislative Assembly (NLA) and the president. There is, however, a dilemma: the design stands in the way of a citizen-driven constitution (Yakani, 10 June 2015) because, no matter what input might arise from the citizens during the NCC, the results will be decided afterwards in the parliament by the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM),¹⁰ which is dominated by politicians who have been partly appointed by the president.

The timeline has become an obstacle as well. The expectation that the 'permanent' constitution project would be completed by 2015 was obviously overly optimistic. Because of the current political and military renegotiations, two extensions have already been granted by the legislature, now pushing the deadline to 2018.¹¹

The structure and activities of the NCRC, based on the 2009 UN guidance note, reveal that 'procedural objectivities' (Rottenburg 2009a) are produced by the international partners through activity plans on how to produce a constitution. Such plans and schedules determine what actions are viewed as necessary to achieve the stated goals, as well as the conditions, timing and personnel involved. The NCRC Action Plan 2013/14 (NCRC 2013) follows the UN guidance note and its attached sample process in terms of general structure, activities and timeline. Specific project management language is used as well, particularly procedural verbs such as 'organize', 'execute', 'consult', 'recruit', 'create' and 'produce'. The use of this language creates the impression of a linear process and objective procedures.

Furthermore, the international concept of 'ownership', discussed above, was built into the Action Plan 2013/14. Under the rubric of 'national ownership', for

many of the activities the Action Plan identifies the so-called 'responsible actors' (the NCRC) and 'implementing actors' (international partners). However, for some of the important activities relating to technical assistance and expertise, the roles are reversed: for instance, international actors are responsible for creating public submission databases, providing thematic research conducted by sub-committees, recruiting thematic experts for research on South Sudan, producing comparative studies, recruiting constitution-drafting experts, etc. Within the context of this division of labour, the question of who actually owns the process arises.

Regarding 'popular ownership' as outlined in the 2009 UN guidance note and in the TCRSS,¹² the NCRC Action Plan foresaw components such as civic education and public consultation campaigns, each of which was to last about six months (NCRC 2013). Following this schedule, the NCRC launched a civic education programme to involve the public in the different regions of South Sudan in the constitution-making process in mid-2013. Due to the commission's chronic lack of key resources – such as funding and appropriate locations – and due to a 'lack of political will' as informants critically remarked (Aciek, 14 April 2013), the process floundered and the campaign was doomed to failure. Moreover, the 'December 2013 political crisis' forced the commission to halt its civic engagement efforts because the major political actors have turned their attention to military renegotiations in many parts of the country.

It remains to be seen how the current political and military renegotiations will impact the continuation of constitution making, what effects the general reshuffling taking place among the presidential appointees will have and what amended action plans will look like. It is still an open question whether the civic education and public education tools will go beyond a mere awareness campaign of the national and international elites' official constitution-making activities (Seidel and Sureau 2015). Tensions between the idea of 'public ownership' and the application of project management tools, with their persuasive logic of 'objective procedures', have surfaced and become obvious. The timetable was not flexible enough to introduce and re-evaluate ideas that might arise during the public consultations.

Moreover, a generally paternalistic attitude seems to prevail among international actors in the form of a 'care and control mixture' (Barnett 2016, 23–40), despite proclaimed local ownership priorities. Erikson and Kostić's (2013, 6) observations on international peace-making and peace-building seem to be reflected in the constitution-making process as well: 'Domestic autonomy and ownership of the process are seen as expressions of the end result, while during the actual process ownership is curtailed through notions of shared ownership or by external supervision.' Even though the modality of statehood is still under negotiation by a multitude of actors, the manner in which technical assistance is provided by international actors co-regulates the constitution-making process and reduces the chances of substantially assessing and integrating the interests of the different parts of the segmented society by simultaneously proclaiming the potentially conflicting ideas of national and popular ownership. On the other

hand, the governmental political actors involved are prone to apply and translate constitutional schemes, thereby creating procedural objectivities and utilizing guidelines according to their own needs, as will be demonstrated in the following.

Instruments and models in translation

When taking a closer look at the technologies of governance that international actors¹³ help to establish in order to promote and implement the RoL framework, one can identify a number of instruments that are supposed to support constitution making in South Sudan. For instance, international actors offered access to legal databases to the NCRC, thereby directing their attention to certain presumably successful and therefore desirable schemes of constitutionalism. They promised to create ‘online public submission forms’ to get public input (NCRC 2013). This participatory tool belongs to the ‘good/best practices’ tested in other constitution-making settings such as South Africa and Kenya. The ‘good’ or ‘best’ practices concept is one of the main tools used to promote RoL, in particular to advance the idea of ‘good governance’. The concept of ‘best practice’ in policy discourses, however, is based on a flawed underlying assumption: that production and management processes are uniform enough for a ‘best practice’ to be identified and then adopted more or less ‘as is’ by another entity. ‘Good’ and ‘best’ practices become a standardization tool that allows different settings to be compared and measured against one another. In the end, they become strategic representations and an advocacy device for those whose interests ‘best practices’ serve.

The applicability of these well-intended participatory tools in the South Sudanese setting is highly questionable because they do not take into account the conditions of the context. There is only very sporadic Internet access in this war-torn country, even in the major cities. Hence, Internet-based tools such as databases cannot live up to their promise. They need to be adapted to the local circumstances. James Aniaito, chairperson of NCRC’s civic education sub-committee, commented on these ‘online public submission forms’, noting that they are better suited to encouraging diaspora engagement by getting opinions ‘even from outside, from the diaspora in different parts of the world’ (Aniaito, 29 May 2015).

To demonstrate more clearly how powerful local actors have adapted and translated the well-intended RoL instruments, and what kind of unintended consequences the international tools can co-create, let us take a closer look at the ‘making’ and the utilization of the internationally prefabricated 2011 TCRSS, which has already become the perfect instrument of power in the hands of a few dominant local actors.

On 24 March 2015 the South Sudan NLA passed the Constitutional Amendment Bill 2015 (GoSS 2015), extending its own tenure and mandate, the tenure of the president and the life of the NCRC for three more years. The NCRC’s mandate had lapsed at the end of 2014 without having fulfilled its task. The ‘December 2013 political crisis’ had further depleted the NCRC’s financial resources and limited the availability of technical support. The NCRC’s ability to

continue its work was doomed to fail (NCRC 2014). Accordingly, the NCRC chairperson strongly recommended that the NLA extend the commission's mandate 'for a period not less than three years subject for review when a permanent peace is realised in the country' (NCRC 2015).

While the constitutional amendment was being discussed in parliament, the government and opposition forces were negotiating ceasefire and peace agreements in Addis Ababa, including a power-sharing deal under the auspices of the EAC, the IGAD and the international community. Consequently, it has been argued that this proposed constitutional amendment bill runs counter to the 'peace deal' because in the peace agreement it was agreed to set up a TGNU as well as a new roadmap for constitution making. Options for redesigning the process were discussed during the IGAD (PLUS)¹⁴-led peace mediation in 2014–2015.¹⁵ Suggestions made in the course of the debates ranged from reforming the SPLM-led NCRC, including the appointment procedure, to fundamentally 'scrapping' the NCRC altogether and restarting the process by, for example, nominating a ten-member technical drafting committee (Gideon, 24 May 2015; Yakani, 10 June 2015).

The TCRSS stipulates that the tenure and mandate of the president, along with those of the national and state legislatures, were supposed to terminate by 9 July 2015 to make way for a national election process.¹⁶ At the beginning of 2015, however, the president exercised his constitutional right and initiated this constitutional amendment.¹⁷ This came after national elections were called off and political negotiations among the warring factions to end the more than one-year-long internal conflict broke up without reaching an agreement. In light of the ongoing civil war and insecurity in the country, not only was the government opposed to any elections, but international and civil society actors were as well. During the parliamentary debate, the overall tenor was that the extension was necessary for stability in the country and to avoid a power vacuum (NLA 2015). A few opposition MPs tried unsuccessfully to block the constitutional amendment. They argued that term limits constitute the core of a constitutional presidential democracy and cannot be amended without fundamentally changing the nature of the state. This constitutional amendment would go far beyond the mandate of the NLA; as one of my interviewees put it, 'No government in a democratic state has the power to extend its own term of office' (Adigo, 27 March 2015). In the end, the amendment was passed, a political move that was possible because of the composition of the parliament.¹⁸ The successful constitutional amendment manoeuvre not only enabled the government to buy time; it was also an attempt to secure the status quo in order to stabilize the 'political crisis' situation. The extension of the tenure gave government actors more space and *de jure* legitimacy to pursue their own interests during the next round of peace negotiations with the opposition factions. One has to bear in mind that the manoeuvre was possible because many still unanswered fundamental questions regarding, for example, governmental structure or division of powers had already been predetermined in the transitional constitution; on the basis of modules taken from the international constitution-making toolboxes. By utilizing the Transitional Constitution of 2011

and the established 'democratic' institutions and constitutional mechanisms, the president and powerful local political actors managed to secure a constitutional amendment to remain in office for a few more years.

Local translation dynamics become visible in the constitutionally enshrined excessive powers of the president. During the making of the Transitional Constitution of 2011, the translation processes were already controlled by the president's hand-picked Technical Committee to Review the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan. About two-thirds of its members were from the ruling SPLM Party, which was the proportion necessary for consensus according to the committee's Internal Rules.¹⁹ Accordingly, while reviewing the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan of 2005, the Technical Committee – behind closed doors – granted the president extraordinary powers in the Transitional Constitution to deal with the political and military fragmentation facing the war-torn country (see Seidel and Moritz 2011). A closer look at the composition of the NCRC reveals that the majority of its members were also politicians.²⁰ As was the case with the drafting of the TCRSS, the ruling party and its alliances carved out for themselves a privileged position and the political leeway necessary to assert significant control over the constitution-making process. The influence of the few members representing civil society and political parties other than the SPLM seems to have been reduced to a rubber-stamp function, with their signatures becoming a mere formality in light of the majority voting system (see Seidel and Sureau 2015).

The political reality since 2012 shows that President Salva Kiir used his constitutionally enshrined powers excessively to promote his own interests. He ousted Vice-President Riek Machar²¹ twice from his position, first in 2013 when Machar announced his intention to run for president in 2015,²² and then again after originally agreeing to establish the TGNU jointly with Machar in 2015. Moreover, the president exercised his constitutional powers to dismiss the entire cabinet, including all the ministers and deputy ministers,²³ as well as most of the state governors, appointing 'caretaker' governors in their place.²⁴ The president's ability to dissolve, for instance, 'a state Legislative Assembly in the event of crisis in the state'²⁵ seems to be a break with the conventional separation of powers between legislative, executive and judicial branches. These political manoeuvres set in motion extreme political and military renegotiations within the political arena (see Seidel and Sureau 2015). The overstretched constitutional rules applied by the president – with the exception of his own embedded excessive powers – have been taken from the constitution-building toolbox designed and provided by international actors.

Conclusion

This study justifies scepticism of the way the internationalized constitution-making experiments in war-torn settings are conducted. The South Sudanese actors in institutionalized forums negotiate within the normative frames of the international actors. The toolboxes that are provided by international actors

generally do not take into account the fact that the experimentation is taking place in an emerging state where non-violent and violent negotiations over the mode of statehood are ongoing and where the constellations of political actors are unstable and ever-changing. In South Sudan, provisions to be inscribed into the constitution are contested by a multitude of actors with different claims and interests. Accordingly, acknowledging some of these claims while *de jure* regulating disputes through legal provisions can in fact impede ongoing negotiation processes among the fragmented political and military actors. In what appears to be a misguided impulse, international constitution-making assistance still focuses on homogenizing local settings supported by the grand frame of RoL. The predetermined international toolboxes tend to ignore local socio-political constellations and dynamics.

A serious problem is that the international ‘prescriptions’ for producing a constitution seem to presume that South Sudan is a ‘reconstruction’ state instead of a ‘construction’ state. The rather state-centred and often ‘top-down’ recipes do not take other powerful actors – such as the fragmented traditional or religious authorities – into account and are not flexible enough to take the emerging nature of the state as a starting point. Rather, international actors ‘advertise’ their own products and solutions and try to produce quick results that generally prove to be unsustainable. The internal logic and prescribed steps of the proposed process limit the variety of modes of possible ‘technical assistance’ and hinder the ability to rethink and adapt a chosen assistance measure, to say nothing of challenging broader concepts such as ‘project law’ or the overarching RoL framework. This path dependency prevents actors from raising and addressing such fundamental issues as the very mode of statehood the South Sudanese people aspire to. Unfortunately, this brief exposé exemplifies the way South Sudanese constitutional arrangements have been produced to date. The Technical Commission did nothing more than ‘review’ the Interim Constitution of 2005, and the NCRC was only given the mandate to ‘review’ the Transitional Constitution of 2011, not to challenge, let alone fundamentally rewrite, the documents. Such a process by design forestalls the production of a broader consensus.

A closer look at the *de facto* translation process reveals that currently dominant national actors use the international tools for their own purposes and to advance their own interests. It also shows that what local actors accept, adopt and appropriate from the international tools very much depends on whether the offers strengthen their own position. This becomes visible in the negotiations over the constitutionally enshrined extraordinary powers of the president. Accordingly, the international tool sets, as well the contested issues inscribed in South Sudan’s Transitional Constitution, have already become powerful instruments in the hands of a few dominant local actors. Thus, the translation process demonstrates that the localization dynamics are controlled by local politics, leading to a situation in which the actual results of translation processes seem to be contrary to the ideas and intentions underpinning the RoL concept.

This brief sketch has illustrated that attempts to produce South Sudan’s ‘supreme law of the land’ out of the internationally predefined concepts, modules

and templates are misguided. Accordingly, the results suggest that the international recipes for well-intentioned constitutional assistance initiatives in war-torn settings need to be fundamentally reconsidered in light of the manifold unintended consequences that inevitably occur during the translation processes. At the structural level, a self-critical approach is of utmost importance if one is to deconstruct the baggage that comes with international interventions, namely the hegemonic grid of frames and project techniques. It would also behove international and national actors to reflect more critically on the broader (asymmetrical) political implications and interests. Such an approach might have the effect of limiting the international community's contribution to constitution making to sharing experiences, focusing on common global challenges and balancing theory and reality. But doing so could ultimately contribute to the mutual discovery of a *spectrum* or *continuum* of potential 'solutions' from which to choose. One precondition is to avoid relying on predetermined 'good' or 'best' practices and the hegemonic project law approach, as an appropriate 'option' in one context may well prove to be inappropriate in another.

Notes

- 1 Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Department of Law & Anthropology of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and Fellow at Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Centre for Global Cooperation Research (Germany) in 2015/16, kseidel@eth.mpg.de.
- 2 For more comprehensive treatments of 'translation' as an analytical tool, see Merry 2009, 265–302; Shimada 2006, 83–95; Bachmann-Medick et al. 2012, 331–359; Behrends et al. 2014.
- 3 Models can be understood as 'analytical representations of particular aspects of reality created as an apparatus or protocol for interventions to shape this reality for certain purposes' (Behrends et al. 2014, 1–2).
- 4 It began as a political power struggle within the SPLM and disputes over the party's constitution making that escalated in December 2013, setting in motion a spiral of violent conflict that continues to the present in which Salva Kiir and Riek Machar became main opponents. They are not the only protagonists in light of the fragmented armed forces.
- 5 Art. 202 TCRSS.
- 6 Key elements of the grammar of constitutionalism include the recognition of civil, political and economic rights and freedoms, the separation of powers, an independent judiciary, the review of the constitutionality of laws, control of the amendment of the constitution and institutions that support democracy (Fombad 2011, 1014f; Akiba 2004, 6).
- 7 www.undp.org/content/dam/southsudan/library/Fact%20Sheets/UNDP-SS-Rule-of-law-flyer.pdf
- 8 UN Doc S/2004/616.
- 9 Art. 203(1) TRCSS: the NCC will comprise delegates representing political parties, civil society organizations, women's organizations, youth organizations, faith-based organizations, people with special needs, traditional leaders, etc.
- 10 The ruling SPLM Party is the civil wing of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).
- 11 TCRSS (Amendment Act 2013); TCRSS (Amendment Act 2015).
- 12 Art. 3(1) TCRSS: 'The Constitution derives its authority from the will of the people.'

- 13 The provision of expertise ranges from individual states to groupings of states, (supra-) regional institutions, non-local NGOs, commercial actors, research institutions and think tanks.
- 14 The members of IGAD PLUS include the East African IGAD countries, the African Union Commission, China, the European Union, Norway, the UK, the US and the UN.
- 15 The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), including the African Union, the UN, the EU, the Troika (the US, the UK and Norway), China and the IGAD Partners Forum, brokered seven ceasefire agreements that included the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity between the main warring factions in South Sudan. Since May 2016 South Sudanese leaders have been negotiating the implementation of the 'Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan' of 17 August 2015.
- 16 Art. 66, 100, 164 TCRSS.
- 17 Art. 101f TCRSS.
- 18 One has to bear in mind that the overall majority of MPs belong to the ruling SPLM Party. Of the 332 MPs (282 NLA + 50 Council of the States), only 170 are elected, while the remaining 162 members (112 + 50) are appointed directly by the president.
- 19 Art. 10(1) NCRC Internal Rules of Procedure, 2012; Report of the Technical Committee, 2011.
- 20 Presidential Decree RSS/PD/J/03/2012, 9 January 2012.
- 21 The former vice-president leads one of the armed opposition factions, the SPLM In Opposition (SPLM-IO).
- 22 See Johnson (2003) for the role of Riek Machar during the civil war.
- 23 See Art. 112(1), 117(1) TCRSS.
- 24 Art. 104(2) TCRSS.
- 25 Art. 101 (r) TCRSS.

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Part III

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6 What is wrong with the United Nations?

Cynicism and the translation of facts

Sebastian Schindler

Introduction¹

Reading academic analyses of the United Nations (UN) can be a frustrating experience. A case in point is a book by one of the foremost scholars of the world organization, Thomas G. Weiss. In *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It*, Weiss depicts the state of the UN in sinister terms. The book begins with the assertion that the organization 'seems remarkably ill-adapted to the times' and 'perpetually in crisis' (2012, 1). It concludes by stating that 'much of the preceding analysis might very well even "depress Dr Pangloss," the character in Voltaire's *Candide* who believes that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds' (2012, 224). But what, then, is wrong with the UN?

In his book, Weiss analyses four principal problems: the outdated 'Westphalian' concept of national sovereignty (chapter 1), the 'artificial' and 'counter-productive' North-South divide (chapter 2), 'feudal' tendencies within the UN system of specialized agencies (chapter 3), and, finally, the deterioration of the 'independence and competence' of UN staff (chapter 4). Weiss is highly critical specifically of the US government: 'American unilateralism was such a part of world politics during the first decade of the twenty-first century that it permeates this book' (2012, 5). More generally, the most trenchant critique in Weiss's book is directed against what he describes as 'narrowly defined national interests' (2012, 13), i.e. the self-interests of governments. But Weiss is critical also of the UN's agencies and its executive leaders, which he calls 'feudal kingdoms (individual organizations) and feudal barons (their executive heads)' (2012, 74). The decentralization of the UN Secretariat makes it particularly vulnerable to the influence of particularistic interests. Moreover, it leads to 'clashes over institutional turf and competition for resources', or equally suboptimal, to 'paralysis' (2012, 14).

Through reading Weiss's book, a picture emerges of the UN as a field of self-interested struggles: the picture of a world organization pulled apart by the egoistic desires and manipulations of numerous individual and collective actors. This picture appears, in Weiss's text, as a mere description of facts, yet it has also considerable normative force. This force is contained in the condemnation and frustration that the picture creates. For Weiss, the pursuit of self-interest is what is wrong with the UN.

What if one turns this picture itself into an object of examination? What if one examines the normative force of this picture, rather than accepting it as a factual description? Such a move is usually interpreted as a move away from the examination of facts. Rather than examining actual actions, one will examine interpretations and meanings. Rather than examining reality as it is, one will examine how reality is ‘produced’. In other words, one will be concerned with analysing the productive power of discourse. As Barnett and Duvall explain,

to attend to the analysis of productive power is to focus on how diffuse and contingent social processes produce particular kinds of subjects, fix meaning and categories, and create what is taken for granted and the ordinary of world politics.

(Barnett and Duvall 2005, 56)

The ‘taken for granted’ and ‘the ordinary’ of world politics: this is Weiss’s picture of the UN as a field of self-interested struggles. But how is this picture created?

As I will argue in this chapter, the creation of Weiss’s picture hangs closely together with how facts are dealt with. In order to understand how Weiss’s picture of the UN emerges, we need to examine how specific facts are selected, isolated, and publicized. As Carr puts it, ‘the facts are really not at all like fish on the fishmonger’s slab’ (1987, 23). They are ‘like fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean’, and to understand why and how specific fish are caught, we need to examine the ‘tackle’ that scholars use, as well as the ‘kind of fish’ they want to catch (Carr 1987, 23). As I intend to analyse in detail, this choice of ‘tackle’ has indeed important effects. It gives shape to a specific vision of the world rather than another. Weiss’s ‘tackle’, i.e. the categories and assumptions he uses to select specific facts rather than others, shapes his view of the UN.

What’s Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It is not merely an analysis of the facts as they are. Rather, in Weiss’s book, world politics appears ‘in translation’. This is the case for every piece of research. In some sense, ‘all researchers “translate” the experience of others’ (Temple 1997, 609, quoted in Freeman 2009, 2). Translation, as Campbell et al. (2014, 5) point out, ‘requires work by key actors . . . to produce and circulate relevant knowledge’. Analysing how researchers do so allows one to criticize what is ordinarily taken for granted. Specifically, an analysis of Weiss’s research as translation can show that the main result of his problem analysis – that the UN is pervaded by self-interest – is the outcome of how he deals with facts. Weiss’s frustrating picture of the UN is more than a neutral analysis; it is the product of a discourse that takes for granted that self-interest is indeed objectively what is wrong with world politics, a discourse that selects only those facts that confirm this impression.

Making such an argument is often taken to imply a belief in the thesis that ‘anything goes’. It is taken to imply the belief that there is no safe distinction between fact and lie, since, as the theoretical position is usually – and falsely – framed, facts are always produced and could thus always be produced differently.

But this is an implausible, faulty exaggeration of the plausible and highly evident argument that facts are not simply out there. In what follows, I will thus not argue that Weiss's depiction of the UN is entirely arbitrary and has no basis in the facts. On the contrary, I will attempt to analyse precisely Weiss's ways of dealing with – or, as we might now say, of translating – the facts.

So, how does Weiss translate the facts? Given that numerous facts are presented in *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It*, there is no way for me to give a comprehensive answer to this question. This chapter will focus only on one single set of facts, namely the facts about an individual UN leader that Weiss depicts as a particularly 'bad egg', an example of 'egregious incompetence' (Weiss 2012, 127). This UN leader is a former director-general of one of the UN's specialized agencies, the Rome-based UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Edouard Saouma. A Lebanese agronomist who joined FAO in 1962, Saouma was elected director-general in 1975. He headed the organization over a period of 18 years, from 1976 to 1993. During his tenure, he acquired a controversial reputation. Some saw him as a courageous advocate of the developing countries as well as an effective manager; others derided him as corrupt and autocratic (cf. Davies 2013; Ingram 2007). Weiss belongs to the latter group.

The chapter will trace the references, or acts of translation, through which the facts about Saouma reach Weiss. In doing so, it will demonstrate how the discourse of self-interest shapes the selection of facts. This discourse is the 'tackle' that Weiss and the author on whom Weiss relies, Graham Hancock (1989), use. There is nothing inherently problematic about using this tackle. We all use tackles in our fishing for the facts, and I will reflect on my own use of tackle in the conclusion to this piece. However, there is a problem when the use of the tackle becomes unreflective and uncritical – when, so to speak, no close look is taken anymore at the nature of the fish that has been caught in one's tackle. This is the fallacy of Weiss and, much more than him, Hancock. Weiss and Hancock make a simple but highly consequential mistake. They accept allegations of selfishness as true without inquiring into the political situations in which these allegations were raised.

It may be that Weiss and Hancock have simply made an unimportant oversight in one single case, a case moreover that plays only a minor, subordinate role in Weiss's book. But what I will attempt to show in this piece is that the fallacy they commit is reflective of a larger problem of dealing with facts, a problem that haunts not only the literature, but also the UN itself. This problem is, in one word, cynicism – it is the unreflective, uncritical use of the assumption of self-interest. Thomas Friedman, the *New York Times* columnist, has captured the problematic character of cynicism by distinguishing it from scepticism. While the sceptic, says Friedman, asks questions, the cynic already has the answers (quoted in Jamieson and Cappella 1997, 26). Cynicism is thus a defect in how facts are dealt with, it is a *problem of translating the facts*. A cynical way of translating the facts consists in the failure to deal with facts reflectively and critically, the failure to examine the precise nature of the fish caught in one's

tackle. The cynic assumes that all the fish in the wide ocean are alike – they're all, the cynic assumes without conducting inquiries, self-interested. As I will suggest in the conclusion to the chapter, cynicism (and not self-interest) is, ultimately, what is wrong with the UN. Before arriving at this conclusion, it will be necessary to examine four instances of translating 'the facts about Saouma', beginning with Weiss's book.

Edouard Saouma in *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It* (2012)

Thomas Weiss is a central figure of academic research on the UN. He has served as executive director of the Academic Council on the UN System and as research director of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), which elaborated the famous proposal for a 'Responsibility to Protect'. He was president of the International Studies Association (ISA) in 2009–10, and was honoured as the ISA's 'Distinguished IO Scholar' in 2016. In sum, Weiss has written and edited some 35 books, among them a seminal textbook on the UN (Weiss et al. 2010) and the *Oxford Handbook on the United Nations* (Weiss and Daws 2007). In his own words, Weiss spent his 'analytical career steeped in the intricacies of the institutional behavior and misbehavior of the UN system' (Weiss 2012, xiv). His book *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It*, which appeared with Polity Press in 2008 and in 2012, is Weiss's attempt at a 'synthesis' of the insights that he gained in decades of studying the world organization, a synthesis that is meant to be accessible for a general audience as well as for 'UN junkies' (2012, xiv).

Is Weiss's analysis of the UN cynical? While Weiss does argue that 'narrowly defined national interests' are the UN's most fundamental problem, he does not claim that human motivations are wholly reducible to self-interest, a viewpoint he instead ascribes to political realism as a theory of international politics (Weiss 2012, 13, 21). Weiss self-identifies as a 'constructivist': he believes that interests can be changed, and indeed calls for precisely such change to happen, although he remains rather sceptical on its general outlook (2012, 21). Moreover, Weiss does not only discuss cases of how narrow self-interests pervade the UN, but also more positive examples of UN staff that Weiss admires (2012, part II, chapters 5–8). Still, Weiss's pessimism pervades his book. His text doubtless has the potential to increase and spread cynicism about the UN – even among those who, like 'Dr Pangloss', would start out with a positive, optimist attitude.

But are not readers who are persuaded by Weiss's analysis simply enlightened about the true, inner functioning of the UN? Is not Weiss's depressing picture simply adequate? With this question, we turn to the question of how Weiss translates the facts. As I will show, the way in which Weiss writes about former FAO Director-General Saouma provides evidence of how Weiss's generalized assumptions shape the facts he presents. Saouma features only in a couple of sentences in Weiss's book. Weiss introduces Saouma in the chapter on the 'ailments' of the international civil service, under the title 'Overwhelming Bureaucracy and

Underwhelming Leadership'. The chapter begins with the observation that 'the deterioration over time of its [the UN's] independence and competence is striking' (Weiss 2012, 111). Weiss then repeatedly develops one crucial explanation for this deterioration, namely that job positions are filled not according to criteria of competence, but because of political connections and interests. Most often, these interests are the interests of states that want their nationals to work in the UN, in order to increase their influence and gather 'intelligence' (2012, 112–13). This practice, Weiss affirms, directly contradicts the actual goal of establishing an international civil service: namely to have civil servants 'whose allegiance is to the welfare of the planet, not to their home countries' (2012, 111). Weiss introduces Saouma as one example of how 'politics trumps competence' in the UN (2012, 127). 'Too often', he writes,

selection criteria . . . have . . . been determined more by nationality than by qualifications and the ability to do the job. Hence, politics gets in the way of selecting personnel and ultimately of optimum performance and impact. Two of the most painful and well-known cases within the field of sustainable development concern the egregious incompetence of UNESCO's director-general from 1974 to 1987, Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, and the FAO's director-general from 1976 to 1993, Edouard Saouma.

(Weiss 2012, 127)²

Weiss explains that both M'Bow and Saouma were elected 'because it was their respective region's "turn" at the helm of these organizations' (2012, 128). However, this is not true. There is no rotation among regions for the position of FAO director-general. In fact Saouma's main rival in the 1975 elections came from Latin America and had a good chance of being elected (Davies 2013, 2). Saouma is also not obviously unqualified on the basis of his professional 'qualifications'. He was educated as an agricultural engineer and agronomist, headed Lebanon's National Institute for Agricultural Research for seven years, and FAO's Land and Water Development Division for ten years (Davies 2013, 1).³ Saouma is not an example for how national interests lead to the selection of unqualified personnel in the international civil service.

Weiss uses the example of Saouma to substantiate a generalized hypothesis, namely that national self-interest – or in Weiss's terms, 'politics' – leads to incompetence in the international civil service. Yet the facts of Saouma's case do not support this hypothesis. Saouma was not elected because it was his region's 'turn' to head the FAO. Nor does he clearly lack professional qualifications and experience (although he may be considered incompetent in another sense, to which I will turn in a moment). In Weiss's account of Saouma, the relationship between generalized thesis and specific case is inadequate. The generalized thesis shapes and transforms the facts to make them fit. Weiss does not inquire into facts to confirm the truth of his thesis. Instead, his thesis creates the facts that confirm it.

The creation of facts is not the only way in which a cynical attitude comes to the fore in Weiss's treatment of Saouma. Weiss's description of Saouma's alleged

incompetence is very brief: 'Saouma was lambasted by many, including the much-publicized criticism by Graham Hancock in *Lords of Poverty*. His corrupt and autocratic management practices, as well as his rigid control of information, became an embarrassment' (Weiss 2012, 128).

Saouma was indeed criticized 'by many'. He is indeed a prime example of a 'lord of poverty' in Hancock's book of the same title. But note that Weiss does not reflect on what the fact of being criticized means. Instead, in his text the allegations become facts. Saouma is, like M'Bow, 'egregiously incompetent': his management practices are 'corrupt and autocratic', and his control of information is 'rigid'.

In Weiss's account of Saouma, the assumption that his behaviour is narrowly self-interested not only creates facts that do not exist (i.e. Saouma's election as a result of regional rotation), it also transforms political allegations into objective information. After all, the fact that Saouma was 'lambasted by many' is not the same as the fact that Saouma really is 'corrupt and autocratic'. The first is the diagnosis of a political situation; the second is the determination of who is right (the critics) and who is wrong (Saouma) in this situation. Note that my argument is not that all the criticisms of Saouma are in reality false and have no basis in the facts. But in order to check whether and to what degree the allegations actually correspond to facts, an empirical examination is necessary. If a brief summary is given, then it is at least necessary to mention that the allegations were intensely disputed, and that their political contestation may have an impact on their validity. The failure to consider this contestation is evidence of cynicism: of the tendency to use the assumption of self-interest in such a way that its validity is ensured not by empirical evidence, but by an a priori certainty that precedes the engagement with the facts.

To be fair, my critique of Weiss has so far ignored the fact that Weiss does provide empirical evidence. Weiss's brief account of Saouma's incompetence relies on one other source which he explicitly quotes: Graham Hancock's much-publicized *Lords of Poverty* (2012, 128, fn. 26). Yet in Hancock's account of Saouma, it is obvious that the charges raised against him stem from political adversaries. Most of Hancock's sources are actors that supported an alternative candidate in the highly contested FAO elections of November 1987, in which Saouma was re-elected for a third six-year term. However, interestingly, although Hancock does mention that the charges are allegations raised by adversaries in a highly contested political campaign, he still treats them uncritically. Hancock's *Lords of Poverty* is, much more than *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It*, a manifestation of cynicism. Since Hancock is Weiss's source on Saouma, and since Hancock's book is a continuous reference in graduate teaching on international development as well as among former diplomats,⁴ I will analyse this book in some detail.

Edouard Saouma in *Lords of Poverty* (1989)

Graham Hancock is a British journalist who, as he explains in his book *Lords of Poverty: The Freewheeling Lifestyles, Power, Prestige and Corruption of the Multibillion*

Dollar Aid Business, had once wanted to work for the UN. At the time, in the 1970s, Hancock had won a 'lucrative' contract with UNICEF (1989, 83). He regarded the UN 'as a sort of Utopia' (1989, 83). UNICEF in particular struck him, 'with its crusading message, as a beacon of decency and reasonableness in an unjust and cruel world' (1989, 83). However, years later, Hancock freed himself from this illusion. Having once believed in the nobility of the UN's mission, he realized

what spurious cant it in fact is for the majority of the UN's 50,000 employees, how cynical many of them have become, and the great extent to which most merely go through the motions of working for a better world. The atmosphere of idealism that had once so uplifted me is, I now understand, just a veneer or—worse than that—a mere stage set, a one-dimensional façade that shouldn't fool anybody. Behind it there is almost nothing at all.

(Hancock 1989, 83–4)

Hancock perceives, like Weiss, an enormous gap between idealism and reality in the UN. Weiss at one point compares the UN system, and contemporary global governance more generally, to the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland*: 'a head floating with no body, no real substance, basically an ethereal reality' (2012, 230). Hancock uses different metaphors, but the diagnosis is the same: the UN's normative discourse is a 'veneer', a 'stage set', a 'façade'. Behind it one finds 'nothing', i.e. one does not find any sincere commitment to the ideals that the organization should embody. Instead one finds, also according to Hancock, self-interests:

Whatever noble mission the United Nations may once have had has, I am now convinced, long since been forgotten in the rapid proliferation of its self-perpetuating bureaucracies—in the seemingly endless process by which empires have been created within the system by ambitious and greedy men and then staffed by time-servers and sycophants. Rather than encouraging humility and dedication, the world body's structure seems actively to reward self-seeking behavior and to provide staff with many opportunities to abuse the grave responsibilities with which they have been entrusted.

(Hancock 1989, 84)

Hancock attacks the UN in considerably more blunt and aggressive ways than Weiss. One can feel, through and in these lines, the enormous frustration that Hancock must have personally experienced. This frustration appears to have been particularly strong precisely because Hancock once sincerely believed in the nobility of the UN's goals. As he admits at one point, the idealistic mission of the UN, symbolized in a quotation from Isaiah that is carved into a wall opposite its headquarters ('They shall beat their swords into plowshares . . .'), had moved him 'to tears' at the time when he still had a contract with UNICEF (1989, 83). The nobility of the UN's mission makes the contrast to actual practice

particularly stark; enthusiastic idealism then leads to a particularly frustrating experience of disillusionment.

Hancock substantiates his claims about self-interest – about ambition and greed, self-seeking behaviour and abuse in the UN – with examples. The example he discusses in greatest detail is Director-General Saouma. Hancock introduces Saouma in the pages that directly follow the paragraphs that express his disillusionment. He mentions the ‘titanic struggle’ that had taken place in 1987 over the re-election of the leaders of UNESCO (M’Bow, who lost) and FAO (Saouma, who won). Hancock then writes that

some extremely grave charges have been levelled against him [i.e. Saouma] and it is difficult to turn a blind eye to all of these. For example, it is alleged that in 1984, at the height of the Ethiopian famine, Saouma held back food aid for twenty days at a time when emergency consignments were urgently required. According to testimony from other FAO officials and from the former Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Dawit Wolde-Giorgis, this delay occurred simply because Saouma disliked Tessema Negash, then Ethiopia’s Assistant Delegate to FAO, and wanted him removed from office: only when Negash was recalled to Addis Ababa was the food released. In Dawit’s own words:

I went [to FAO headquarters in Rome] and tried to brief [Saouma] on what was going on in Ethiopia . . . He interrupted the discussion and told me that our representative was not a very likeable person . . . that it would be very difficult for him to really co-operate with the Ethiopian government as long as we had Tessema Negash as our FAO representative . . . There I was trying to brief a senior UN official about the impending disaster and the number of people dying every day and I was confronted with personal problems . . . that was sickening.⁵

When I [Hancock] approached Saouma in 1989 for an interview to clarify this and other matters, he declared himself unable to receive me because of his ‘many commitments’. I was, however, sent a duplicated press handout in which the accusations concerning Ethiopia were strenuously denied. I would have been more convinced if I had been given the opportunity to question Saouma face to face.

Be this as it may, more general criticism of FAO’s Director-General were also in the air at the time of his re-election. These criticisms—all of which Saouma rejected as untrue—concerned his management style, particularly disliked by the US government. According to a State Department telegram . . .

(Hancock 1989, 85)

Hancock subsequently fills three more pages with charges against Saouma: that his leadership style was autocratic; that he didn’t step down after 12 years as

director-general; that he sought to increase FAO's budget at a time of austerity in the UN; that he used aid grants and perhaps even cash to secure his re-election in 1987 (Hancock 1989, 85–8). The sources for these allegations are mostly Saouma's political opponents, including US, Canadian and British government officials and a direct election adversary in 1987, the Colombian Gonzalo Bula Hoyos (1989, 85–7).

To be fair, also among Hancock's sources one finds some that do not seem to be implicated in the 'titanic struggle' over his re-election. Among them is, in particular, the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Dawit Wolde-Giorgis,⁶ whose statement on a British TV production Hancock quotes in excerpts (see above). From Hancock's endnotes, one learns, however, that the TV documentary *Mr. Famine*, in which Commissioner Dawit raised his allegations, was aired on 5 November 1987. The elections for FAO director-general took place on 9 November 1987. The aid delay had occurred in June 1984, and to my knowledge, Dawit never spoke publicly about the delay in the period in between, i.e. for three and a half years. It seems reasonable to at least point out these facts and reflect on them, and perhaps even to inquire into them, if one presents Saouma as the main example of a greedy 'lord of poverty'. But Hancock does none of these things. He presents the allegations as if they were facts. He notes Saouma's disagreement, but he does not give any background information on why the 1987 elections were contested, such as Saouma's appointment politics that often denied the wishes of the US government (interview with former FAO senior staff member, 20 September 2011).

Even Saouma's attempts at budgetary increases, arguably also a political goal, are presented in such a way that it seems they merely served Saouma's self-interests. Saouma sought, Hancock writes in an accusatory tone, 'ever larger and more lavish budgets' (1989, 86). On the next page he discusses Saouma's personal salary (1989, 87). In contrast, a former close collaborator of Saouma described his budgetary politics in different terms:

Whereas Saouma would oppose the systematic reduction of FAO, and succeeded, because he had the majority in his favor, [his successor] Mr. Diouf has done exactly what the Americans want . . . Mr. Diouf has agreed to cut the FAO budget by over 30%, by one third! . . . Here is this Lebanese guy [i.e. Saouma], telling us, frankly, I'm not gonna do what you tell me. We're going to increase FAO's budget, because we have things to do, and he succeeds each time . . . And it gets to the point where they refuse to pay their statutory obligations. Now . . . Ask yourself: why? Ask yourself why.⁷

Hancock does not ask this question. Instead, he only mentions approvingly that 'an exasperated Western delegate hinted that a withdrawal of financial support from FAO would be likely if Saouma were to get a third term in office' (Hancock 1989, 86). Even before Saouma's re-election, the United States had paid only one third of its assessed, legally due contribution to the FAO budget.⁸ This fact is not mentioned by Hancock. Hancock believes with surprising ease the words of

Saouma's critics, but does not once turn their tool of critique – the assumption of self-interest – against the critics themselves. Hancock does not study the charges against Saouma as political allegations. He merely mentions that it is difficult to 'turn a blind eye to all of these' (1989, 85). That may be true, but it does not automatically imply that one can ignore the conflicts in which the charges were raised.

As with Weiss, my claim is not that everything Hancock says is false. But it is surprising that he does not once consider the possibility that his sources may have some interest in blaming Saouma. Hancock uses the assumption of self-interest in an uncritical way: only to blame Saouma, not once does he question Saouma's critics. He uses this assumption to select all those stories about Saouma that confirm it. He does not quote any instance of Saouma's behaviour that could contradict his assumption. He does not inquire into the status of his sources, i.e. in particular their involvement in conflicts. It would, however, have been quite possible to describe in some greater detail the background of the dispute over the FAO elections of November 1987. In order to demonstrate what a different account of the charges could look like, consider an article in the *Washington Post* from 24 October 1987:

There's a fight at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. It is about the way the agency should do its work of increasing agricultural production in the Third World. It is also about power: not merely what person should run the agency but the perennial U.N. issue of whether the many small members or the few large donors should be in control.

The occasion is the FAO election coming up Nov. 9. Director-General Edouard Saouma, a Lebanese whom his numerous critics find assertive verging on unbearable, is running for an unprecedented third six-year term. The challenger is Moise Mensah of Benin, No. 2 at the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Africa's nominee, Mr. Mensah is supported by countries, including the United States, that provide nearly three-quarters of the FAO budget.

In the old days, the colonial powers ran the colonies' agriculture their way, or ignored it. After World War II, FAO became a Western-driven vehicle of Third World development, but in the Third World's political surge of the 1970s, Dr. Saouma took the wheel. A strong manager whose most bitter foes distinguish his style from that of UNESCO's corrupt and now-departing Amadou Mahtar Mbow, Dr. Saouma has been all business, permitting no anti-Israel nonsense. But he has done things very much his way. This has meant going beyond the technical assistance and policy coordination favored by the big donors into loan programs spread out thinly among the agency's 156 members. It has meant using the director-general's powers to dispense jobs and contracts to enforce his will.

Enter Canada. Canada makes involvement in the politics of world agriculture a focus of its foreign policy, and it has led an opposition consisting of most industrialized democracies. Their broad concerns include their status

in the system and, beyond that, the effectiveness of FAO's programs. Their immense frustration with the hardball ways of Mr. Saouma is palpable, though few other donors are as ready as the Canadians to let it all hang out.

The United States favors the challenger, seeing in Mr. Mensah someone likely to be more respectful of the membership and more sympathetic to free-market principles. The American government is, in this instance, pleased to let Canada get out front. For one reason, it has paid only a third of its 1986–87 dues, and being in arrears, it finds the American voice does not carry. Tactically, discretion may be appropriate. But the real fight—the fight against world hunger—requires a vigorous American role.⁹

I have quoted this *Washington Post* article at length in order to demonstrate what an account that is not marked by cynicism could look like. The article manages to inform its reader about the multiple sides in the conflict. It does not deny that there were allegations against Saouma, but it also points out the various layers of the conflict, which is about power, but also about policy.

The *Washington Post* article demonstrates that Hancock's depiction of Saouma is partial and biased. In both Weiss's and Hancock's books, the assumption of self-interest is not merely an analytical tool that reveals facts about politics. Instead, in both works, the assumption 'creates' its own facts: not necessarily in the sense of inventing them, but in the sense of selecting only very specific instances of behaviour and effacing from them whatever marks them as objects of political contention. Weiss and Hancock, on whom Weiss relies, treat allegations as facts without inquiring into the political context in which the charges were raised. They both take a cynical stance vis-à-vis Saouma.

While the charges Hancock cites hang together with the contested election campaign of 1987, this does not necessarily render them false. In the following, I will continue to trace references, focusing on the main charge against Saouma in *Lords of Poverty*, namely that he delayed the approval of an Ethiopian food aid request in June 1984. This allegation was raised by the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Dawit on the British TV documentary *Mr. Famine* in November 1987.

Edouard Saouma in *Mr. Famine* (1987)

In October 1987, the British journalist Peter Gill produced a TV documentary for the independent broadcasting network ITV (Independent Television): *Mr. Famine*. As its title indicates, the documentary is accusatory. *Mr. Famine* is the director-general of the FAO, Saouma. Gill's production was aired on 5 November 1987, four days before the hard-fought re-election of Saouma for a third term. As described in the *Washington Post* article, several Northern governments had, under the leadership of Canada, attempted to terminate Saouma's directorship of FAO, supporting the candidacy of the vice president of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Moise Mensah, of Benin. *Mr. Famine* depicted Saouma as a corrupt and autocratic despot, pursuing his personal power

at any price, even at the price of causing death and starvation. In a scene shot on the pavement in front of Saouma's house, Gill directly confronted Saouma with the charge that he had held up aid deliveries to Ethiopia. Saouma responded, in the words of one viewer, with 'anticipatory and guilty laughs'.¹⁰

Gill had already gained knowledge of the charge against Saouma when he began the production of *Mr. Famine*. In fact, he had written a book about the terrible famine that struck Ethiopia in 1984, titled *A Year in the Death of Africa*, and published in 1986, one year before the TV documentary. Gill begins his book by describing how another film, by his colleague Jonathan Dimpleby, contributed to the dethroning of the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. Dimpleby's film openly depicted malnourished children as well as dead corpses of people who had died in the famine that struck Ethiopia in 1973. Ethiopian television broadcast this film in September 1974, in an edited version: Dimpleby's grim pictures of death and starvation were interrupted with footage of the luxury life at the imperial palace (Gill 1986, 5). This contrast had also been used by demonstrators in the streets of Addis Ababa, who showed posters of a malnourished child side by side with pictures of how Haile Selassie fed morsels of meat to his dogs (Gill 1986, 5). On the day after the film was broadcast in Ethiopia, a group of Army members, among them the later dictator Colonel Mengistu, forced Haile Selassie to sign his abdication.

With *Mr. Famine*, Gill attempted to replicate Dimpleby's feat. Gill's film was to dethrone not the Ethiopian emperor, but an international emperor – Director-General Saouma, who was indeed called 'the emperor' behind his back.¹¹ Unlike Dimpleby's film, Gill's documentary directly attacked the emperor. Still, Gill's film was not granted Dimpleby's success: Saouma was re-elected as director-general on 9 November 1987, four days after Gill's film was aired. Nonetheless, this film did have important effects. It made history, not in the sense of achieving the dethroning of the emperor, but in the sense of shaping the facts known today about Saouma and the UN.

The charges against Saouma's behaviour in 1984 reached the outside world via a highly contested election campaign in 1987. Gill's film played an important role in making these charges known; Dawit himself wrote about his experience only three years later, in 1989, when Hancock's book was also published (see Dawit 1989). In contrast to Gill's documentary, which aired right before the elections, Gill's earlier book *A Year in the Death of Africa* provides a more nuanced account of Saouma and his behaviour. This is partly due to the fact that Gill was, when he wrote his book, not entirely sure about the adequacy of the allegation that Saouma had held up the aid request.

Edouard Saouma in *A Year in the Death of Africa* (1986)

In October 1984, Peter Gill was the first to broadcast from the epicentre of the Ethiopian famine, the town of Korem in northern Ethiopia. Gill's TV coverage made an important contribution to publicizing the famine and helped to mobilize a substantial amount of aid that saved many people's lives. According to UN

estimates, one million Ethiopians may have died, although no one counted in a systematic fashion and it is impossible to know the exact number (Gill 2010, 43). In response to the publicizing of the famine, Bob Geldof founded Band Aid. Western governments began to provide a substantial amount of aid to Ethiopia, an ally of the Soviet Union they had previously hesitated to support. The Soviet Union itself provided very little food aid, sending trucks for transporting aid. In the end, nearly one million tons of food aid were delivered to Ethiopia.

Gill conducted extensive research on why the crisis had been recognized so belatedly. His book *A Year in the Death of Africa: Politics, Bureaucracy and the Famine* identifies a range of factors: the government's concealing of the famine, Western donors' initial reluctance to help an ally of the Soviet Union, the slowness of bureaucratic process, and also journalism's obsession with publicity (Gill 1986). In the summer of 1984, the Ethiopian crisis was hardly recognized as a famine, not least because Ethiopia's Marxist government under Colonel Mengistu attempted to hide it. The government was waging a war against rebel groups in and close to some of the famine areas, and it was preparing to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the revolution in September 1984 (Gill 1986, 5–7; Dawit 1989, 158). While an FAO mission had already recognized that the crisis was severe in March, it had drastically underestimated the country's logistic capacities for transporting food aid. Also, FAO had issued urgent calls for emergency aid for more than 20 African countries, and Ethiopia had for years made inflated aid requests, reducing the credibility of the urgent appeals for aid (Gill 1986, 10). Gill's book also has a chapter on inter-agency competition in the UN and how it hindered aid. In this chapter, 'A Divided Family', Saouma's behaviour is made public for the first time.

Gill writes that he learned about Saouma's decision to delay the approval of an emergency aid request from 'senior officials in other agencies', i.e. agencies other than FAO (Gill 1986, 130). Presumably these were one or several staff members of the Rome-based World Food Programme (WFP), which was then engaged in a tense conflict with FAO, its parent organization. In other words, Gill's principal sources were probably adversaries of Saouma in a protracted bureaucratic conflict.

In Gill's book, the knowledge of the aid delay as a historical fact is rather uncertain. While Gill affirms that there is 'little doubt that the delay was deliberate', he also states that

what remains unclear is why Saouma should have withheld approval for this shipment to Ethiopia Senior officials in other agencies believe that the delay in the emergency shipment may have resulted simply from Saouma's antagonism towards Ingram at WFP and Ingram's senior representative in Addis Ababa, Dr Kenneth King.

(1986, 130)

When he wrote his book, Gill was unaware of Saouma's threat against Dawit and his wish for a recall of the Ethiopian representative Tessema Negash. Gill knew

that there had been a highly unusual delay of 20 days, and he cites 'senior officials in other agencies' who believed that this delay was connected to the 'antagonism towards Ingram at WFP': the confrontation between Saouma (the FAO director-general) and James Ingram (the WFP Executive Director), which had reached a particularly escalated level in June 1984.

In Gill's book, the fact of Saouma's manipulative behaviour is thus not presented as a definite truth. Rather, the truth of the fact first needs to be established. It is a more general knowledge that testifies to the truth of the fact, rather than the fact confirming the truth of the general knowledge. There are two different kinds of general knowledge that reinforce the truth of the allegations against Saouma in Gill's text: his knowledge about the FAO-WFP conflict and about Saouma as a UN director.

Gill extensively analyses the confrontations between WFP and FAO before describing the delay. He argues that the conflict as a whole 'disfigured' the UN's response to the Ethiopian famine (1986, 126). It did so notably because WFP and FAO officials spent so much time fighting each other. Apparently few people in Rome were ready to speak out about the conflict: 'The full extent of the animosity between James Ingram of WFP and Edouard Saouma at FAO has been hidden from public view', writes Gill (1986, 128). When Gill tried to discuss the importance of the matter with senior officials, he encountered an 'embarrassed silence' (1986, 129). Finally, a senior official 'ashamedly' admitted to Gill that the confrontations had affected the UN's response, given that they took up 'about 30 per cent of the time of the most important officials of both organizations' (quoted in Gill 1986, 129).

Gill's more general finding is that the very existence of the conflict had an adverse impact on the UN's response. Gill does not reduce the FAO-WFP conflict to a personal confrontation between Ingram and Saouma. He introduces its background in considerable detail: the complexity of WFP's constitution; FAO's quest for control, rather than oversight; the interests of the United States, which did not want 'its bounty falling into the hands of UN bureaucrats who might not be America's friends' (1986, 127); and the justifications for the institutional links, which Gill describes as a result of the 'sound view that stop-gap measures like food aid should always be part of a wider development effort' (1986, 128; on this conflict, see also Schindler 2014; Ingram 2007; Charlton 1992). Gill emphasizes the frightening level of escalation of the conflict, to which he, like former Executive Director Ingram (2007), refers to as a 'war' (1986, 126–7). Before the background of this knowledge, Gill describes the authorization of emergency aid as one of the means by which Saouma 'has continued to exercise control' over WFP (1986, 129). And then he describes the delay of June 1984.

For the reader of Gill's book, the aid delay appears as part of a more general account of bureaucratic conflict, which Gill describes at first in parallel terms, giving no side a greater responsibility for the dispute. However, after the delay has been introduced, Gill begins to directly criticize Saouma, depicting him as a 'Lebanese warlord' who has 'brilliantly defended his Rome fiefdom since 1976' (1986, 130). More precisely, Gill depicts Saouma as an able yet reckless politician

who gave precedence to his self-interests rather than 'the needs of the hungry' – this is, at least, 'the most serious allegation' against Saouma, 'whether true or not' (1986, 130). The second category of general knowledge that confirms the truth of the aid delay thus concerns the personality of Saouma, or, as Gill writes, his 'attitudes' (1986, 131).

The delay of aid is the most concrete and most detailed allegation against Saouma that Gill raises. Even though his knowledge of the delay is uncertain, this knowledge clearly illustrates what the problem is, with bureaucratic conflict in the UN in general and with the 'warlord' Saouma in particular. In his book, Gill does not speculate about the number of people who might have died as a result of this specific delay. Gill argues that delays resulted from a number of factors. In fact, 9,000 tons of the 30,000 tons of food aid¹² requested had still not been distributed by the end of 1984, six months after Saouma had approved the request (Gill 1986, 131). One reason was the delays in 'donor identification': the World Food Programme's emergency reserve was not legally binding, and Western states were at first hesitant to provide support. Saouma had continuously called for binding regulations, but the United States and the European Commission had resisted such provisions, 'precisely because, it was said, this would give additional power and influence to Saouma in Rome' (1986, 131). The antagonism between Saouma and the donors probably hindered aid to a greater extent than Saouma's specific action. Another author, the International Relations scholar Raymond Hopkins, suggests that the delay was 'a very small incident in what was a major calamity' (1988, 25).

In Gill's book, the description of Saouma's delaying of aid is embedded in two principal contexts. It is preceded by an analysis of the FAO-WFP conflict, and followed by criticisms of Saouma. The fact of the delay confirms, and is confirmed by, the more general knowledge about conflict in the UN and about Saouma's character. Note that, from these two general contexts, only the latter reappears in subsequent translations. In these translations, the FAO-WFP conflict is not even mentioned. The politics of the situation, which Gill's book analyses in some detail, will thus not be represented anymore. Weiss's argument that Saouma's example demonstrates how 'politics trumps competence' (2012, 127) in a curious way misrepresents the situation. Weiss's own account of Saouma is distinctly unaware of politics in the UN: it is an account not of politics, but consists in the depoliticization of a political allegation. Weiss transforms an allegation into an objective fact, and this is why his book is not an account of a problem with politics, but instead itself symptomatic of a political problem.

From Gill's book, one learns that a number of factors hindered the UN and the international community from responding in a timely manner to the Ethiopian famine. Saouma's aid delay occurred together with numerous other problematic happenings. It was part of a dense web of historical developments. Through and because of the analysis of this web, the knowledge of the delay becomes credible. At subsequent translations, the delay will be taken out of this web. To this development, Gill's own TV documentary made a decisive contribution. However, only the uncritical reception of this documentary by Hancock, and

Weiss's uncritical discussion of Hancock's book, ultimately turned Saouma into the seemingly easy and transparent 'problem' that he is not.

Conclusions

This chapter has traced the origins of some known facts about the FAO Director-General Edouard Saouma. In Thomas Weiss's *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It* (2012), Saouma is presented as an egregiously incompetent, corrupt and autocratic UN leader whose appointment was due to narrowly defined national self-interests. Weiss's principal source, Graham Hancock's *Lords of Poverty: The Free-wheeling Lifestyles, Power, Prestige and Corruption of the Multibillion Dollar Aid Business* (1989), cites numerous adversaries of Saouma in the highly contested FAO elections of 1987 to illustrate Saouma's allegedly corrupt management practices, and it gives particular prominence to the charge that Saouma held up the approval of an Ethiopian emergency aid request for 20 days in June 1984. Hancock's source for this charge is a statement by the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Dawit on a British TV documentary, *Mr. Famine* (1987), which aired four days before the contested elections. Peter Gill, the producer of the documentary, made public the aid delay for the first time in his book *A Year in the Death of Africa: Politics, Bureaucracy and the Famine* (1986), where he analyses in some detail the conflict between the WFP and the FAO, in the context of which the aid delay is said to have occurred.

From *A Year in the Death of Africa* to *Mr. Famine* to *Lords of Poverty* to *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It*, a different selection of 'the facts about Saouma' is presented. This difference in translating the facts is not as such problematic. To return to Carr's fishermen rhetoric, the use of tackle is necessary to catch any kind of fish. What is problematic is that Weiss and Hancock do not look with enough critical distance at the kind of fish they have caught. They treat allegations as facts. Now, allegations may be facts; but if one uses them to establish facts, one should say so and why one does so. But neither Hancock nor Weiss are concerned about this problem.

Why did I spend so much time reconstructing the travel of an allegation through four texts? After all, it is quite likely that Saouma indeed delayed aid deliveries in order to pressure the Ethiopian government to recall Tessema Negash, who, as Dawit explained in his 1989 book *Red Tears*, was a close ally of Ingram in the fight between FAO and WFP.¹³ So, what is my own interest in tackling the problem of how a specific set of facts – the facts about Saouma – was translated? The answer is that I consider the problematic treatment of the facts by Weiss and, to a far greater degree, by Hancock, a very important issue if our goal is to understand what's wrong with global cooperation. Weiss and Hancock's uncritical treatment of the facts is not merely an accidental oversight, it is part and parcel of an important problem from which the UN suffers tremendously. This problem is the widely used assumption that all actors in the UN, be they states, agencies or individuals, pursue only their self-interests. This assumption is problematic because it is itself productive of the world that it pretends to explain.

The assumption reifies self-interest, turning it into the seemingly natural and normal way in which social interaction takes place (on reification, cf. Wendt 1992, 410). However, in an organization whose principal goal is the organization of collective action on a global scale, the use of this assumption must create an enormous amount of frustration.

Frustration about self-interest in the UN can have a number of problematic effects. Not least, it can lead to cynicism. As a specific manner of translating the facts, cynicism closes the door on social change. Given that the cynic always already knows that any phenomenon is explainable as the outcome of the self-interest of some actor (often the very same actor over and over again, such as 'the US', 'Saouma', or 'the Jew'), no space is left for transforming social relations. The fact is that it is not unlikely that Saouma was motivated in his actions from precisely such a cynical theory of the world. When I asked Saouma's opponent Ingram (the former WFP Executive Director, whom I met for extended conversations in Canberra in February and March 2013) about the fact that Saouma had held up a request for aid to innocent Ethiopians, Ingram explained to me in some detail his own impression of the situation. Saouma, Ingram said, may have felt justified in delaying aid, because he thought that many other actors were behaving in the same manner. The Ethiopian government had for years made inflated requests for aid. Saouma may have thought, Ingram claimed, that he would delay aid only for a little while, so that no harm would be done. For Saouma, the aid delay was, Ingram said, more like a 'bluff'!

Saouma erred. Real people may have died from his decision to delay aid. Saouma's principal error was, however, not his selfishness. It was that he considered himself entitled to act as he did by a specific kind of general analysis of the UN, an analysis that is not dissimilar to Weiss's own, in that it sees self-interests everywhere. Saouma may have been a 'Dr. Pangloss', an agronomist who started out with the most positive motivations to transform the UN and deliver real aid to the global South. 'As far as I am concerned', one of his former chiefs of staff explained to me in an interview, 'Saouma was all about development' (20 September 2011). The intentions of Saouma, his ambition to turn the FAO into an effective aid organization and to resist domination and hypocrisy by Northern governments, are not what's wrong with the UN. What is wrong is a specific mode of interacting with the world, a way of translating the facts about world politics: the tendency to reduce politics, which is inherently and necessarily plural, to a mere combat zone of selfish interests. It is this translational defect which contains a general permission to engage in questionable forms of behaviour.

Notes

- 1 Drafts of this chapter were presented at three different workshops: two organized by the editors of this volume (Tobias Berger and Alejandro Esguerra) at the Centre for Global Cooperation Research in Duisburg and at WIPCAD Potsdam, and one organized by Zeynep Gulsah Capan, Maj Lervad Grasten and Filipe Robert Rodrigues Drenker dos Reis at the 3rd European Workshops in International Studies (EWIS) in Tübingen. I thank the participants in these workshops for their feedback, and the

organizers for their invitations. The volume editors provided detailed comments that helped to give the chapter its present focus on the translation of facts. Specifically, Alejandro's feedback was highly encouraging and pushed me to analyse precisely how certain facts about world politics come into being. In addition, the chapter benefited from discussions with my colleagues Philip Wallmeier and Tobias Wille. My PhD research, on which this chapter is based, was funded by the German National Academic Foundation and the Gerda Henkel Foundation. Last but not least, I'm deeply grateful to James Ingram, the former WFP Executive Director, without whose remarkable openness and willingness to speak with me for in sum nearly 18 hours this chapter couldn't have been written.

- 2 In the first edition of Weiss's book, M'Bow and Saouma are described as 'two sons of Africa' (Weiss 2008, 123). This factual error (Saouma is Lebanese) is corrected in the second edition.
- 3 As one close collaborator of his emphasized, Saouma had worked, unlike the diplomat Ingram, 'in the "trenches"' (interview, 20 September 2011).
- 4 See the comment by Professor Margaret C. Brindle (George Mason University) on a review of *Lords of Poverty*, 15 September 2010, at www.thefreemanonline.org/columns/book-review-lords-of-poverty-the-power-prestige-and-corruption-of-the-international-aid-business-by-graham-hancock, accessed 16 August 2012. In an interview, a former high-ranking donor official pointed me to Hancock's book as a useful reference (interview conducted via phone on 18 August 2011).
- 5 (The source of this quote according to Hancock's endnotes:) Interviewed in Mr. *Famine*, a documentary in the *This Week* series which was broadcast on Britain's ITV, 5 November 1987. The incident was also reported in *The Times*, London, 5 November 1987. For a more detailed account, see Dawit Wolde-Giorgis, *Red Tears* (1989).
- 6 Dawit is referred to by his first name in all sources, following an Ethiopian custom.
- 7 Interview by author with former senior collaborator of Saouma, conducted on 20 September 2011.
- 8 *Washington Post*, 'The U.N. Food Agency Fight', 24 October 1987, Saturday, Final Edition, p. A20.
- 9 *Washington Post*, 'The U.N. Food Agency Fight', 24 October 1987, Saturday, Final Edition, p. A20.
- 10 Raymond Lloyd, 'Letter 10 to Ministers, Permanent Representatives & Courageous Staff in Rome', 23 April 1988, p. 2; accessed 8 December 2015 on www.webzoom.freewebs.com. Lloyd was a former high-ranking staff member who had quit FAO in frustration years before. He began a veritable letter campaign against Saouma. The quoted letter is number 10, and it includes the sentence 'the deaths of those African children will haunt the FAO Director-General to the grave' (p. 2).
- 11 Michael Hanlon, 'Canada Leads Effort to Oust U.N. "Food Emperor"', *Toronto Star*, 22 October 1987, Thursday, p. A1.
- 12 Gill (1986) writes that the size of the request was 26,000. I follow FAO's information officer Lydiker (1988), who speaks of 30,000 tons.
- 13 FAO's information officer Richard Lydiker later disputed that the delay was deliberate. Lydiker points out that a small amount of the grant (120 tons of instant biscuits) was immediately approved and that, in the meantime, 'essential clarifications' related to food supply and logistic capacities were sought by FAO from WFP (Lydiker 1988, 33). Also Gill (1986, 129) mentions that a small amount of the grant – according to Gill, 200 tons of biscuits – was approved earlier, on 14 June. However, such clarifications seem to be an insufficient explanation of the delay. Thus, Saouma himself stated in a letter to Ingram from 1989 that he usually approved emergency aid requests 'immediately' (cf. Saouma to Ingram, 'Bangladesh: Additional Emergency Food Aid For Flood Victims (Operation No. 3817 Exp. II)', 24 January 1989, FAO Archives, FP 1/1, Vol. XIV). According to Gill, it usually took him no more than one or two days to put his signature on an emergency aid request (Gill 1986, 129).

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7 Reflexivity, positionality and normativity in the ethnography of policy translation

Farhad Mukhtarov

Introduction¹

Policy translation is the process by which policy ideas, knowledge and models travel across various boundaries, such as nation-states, organizations, sectors and cities. It became a prominent subject of research inquiry across the social sciences, from geography to international relations (e.g. Peck and Theodore 2015; Stone 2012). Especially prominent is the attention paid to policy translation with the advance of interpretive policy analysis in public policy (e.g. Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012; Bliesemann de Guevara 2016).

Public policy scholars have long struggled to develop theories and models to account for the process by which policies and policy ideas spread across countries and political systems. Conventional approaches to this process hinge on concepts such as ‘policy transfer’, ‘policy diffusion’, ‘lesson drawing’, ‘institutional isomorphism’, and ‘policy learning’ (Westney 1987; De Jong, Lalenis and Mamadouh 2002; Robertson 1991; Rose 1993; Jacoby 2001; Dolowitz and Marsh 1996; Evans and Davies 1999; Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Mukhtarov 2014). The complexity of the phenomenon is the major reason why there is such a diversity of approaches to studying it. A student of policy translation must acknowledge and account for differences in both *what travels* across jurisdictions, and *what kind of boundaries* are being crossed in such a process. The object of policy translation may be abstract knowledge and ideas, policy models, arguments or wholesale blueprints. The boundaries transcended in such translations, in turn, could be spatial, temporal, organizational, disciplinary or inter-personal. Thus, it is a very complex process and the conventional approaches outlined above have fallen short in explaining *which* and *whose* ideas matter, *why* these matter, as well as in explaining the impact of such policy ideas on the ground. Such factors as symbols, power, values, complexity and chance in the contextualization of a particular policy model have not been adequately discussed in the conventional literature on policy transfer and diffusion (e.g. Simmons, Dobbin and Garrett 2007; Freeman 2009; Mukhtarov 2014, 2016). In order to fill these gaps in the conventional literature, scholars have gradually turned their gaze towards policy translation approaches.

Historically, policy translation has been built upon research in multiple disciplines since the 1970s, and relatively recently has acquired its distinctive place in public policy with a number of advances across various disciplines, such

as urban geography, cultural studies, public health and law (Carlile 2004; Yanow 2004; Lendvai and Stubbs 2009; Clarke 2008; Freeman 2009; McCann and Ward 2012). The evolution of the concept of *translation* proceeded from a focus on the micro level and the process of communication and sense-making between actors in scientific process (Latour 1986) as well as policy process (Clarke et al. 2015), to one on the meso level – interaction in an organization (Czarniawska and Sevón 1996; Yanow 2002), and then to one on the macro level of the spread of ideas and models across countries and jurisdictions (Freeman 2009; Simmons et al. 2007). Thus, for sociologists of science, translation is ‘the spread in time or place of anything – claims, artefacts, goods . . .’ (Latour 1986, 267). For scholars of organizational studies, translation is an iterative process by which ideas are materialized, turned into slogans, objects or actions in practice and then once again turned into ideas as they are communicated (Fadeeva 2004). For recent theorists of translation in public policy, the central research question is to understand the effects of language and meaning in politics (Freeman 2009; Iveković 2005; Newman 2006; Clarke 2008; Lendvai and Stubbs 2009) and what it means to translate ‘effectively’ and ‘successfully’ (Mukhtarov, de Jong and Pierce 2016) and whether such insights have implications for institutional design (Mukhtarov et al. 2015). In that sense, it is important to distinguish between ‘policy translation’ and ‘policy as translation’ conceptualizations of this process (Lendvai and Stubbs 2009). The former concerns the travel of policy ideas and innovations across borders, the latter concerns a fundamentally interpretive take on the process of policy making as ontologically fluid, one which always moves and occurs in ‘waves’ (e.g. Freeman 2012). In this chapter, I focus on policy translation and not policy as translation.

More specifically, policy translation literature views the travel of ideas as contingent and emergent as opposed to being amenable to strategic management. Such ideas as ‘assemblages’ (Bueger 2015; Clarke et al. 2015) and ‘bricolage’ (Bridges, Kurakbayev and Kambatyrova 2015; Freeman 2007) are helpful in understanding this contingency as well as the nature of institutional design under such contingency. Furthermore, such literature acknowledges the modification of meaning in the travel of policy ideas and the possibility of the active construction of meanings by interested agents in this process (Kingfisher 2013; Shore, Wright and Pero 2011; Peck and Theodore 2015; Mukhtarov and Gerlak 2013). Finally, such work pays explicit attention to the issues of scale and space as socially constructed, incomplete and contested (Pow 2014; McCann and Ward 2011; Prince 2016). This new approach attempts to embrace politics in the process of the travel of ideas, as well as language as a tool for political struggle and analytical insight (e.g. Mukhtarov 2013, 2014; Lejano and Shankar 2012; Stone 2012; Park, Wilding and Chung 2014). As a result, such concepts as ‘narratives’, ‘assemblages’, ‘bricolage’, ‘contact zone’, ‘policy mobility’ and ‘policy otherwise’ have been added to the growing vocabulary of public policy studies (Mukhtarov 2016; Mukhtarov and Daniell 2017).

While further conceptual deliberation is key to understanding the process of public policy and international relations through a translation prism, equally

important is the discussion of the methodologies used in such inquiry. Increasingly, scholars interested in interpretive policy analysis and policy translation propose to study policy through ethnography and prolonged immersion in the field with the major emphasis on observation and the lived experiences of the researcher as well as informants (e.g. Schatz 2009; Mukhtarov et al. 2016). Such ethnography inevitably presents a number of political and ethical challenges to a researcher and a more extended discussion of such challenges and possible ways of dealing with them is needed in the literature. In this chapter, I attempt to address these issues. The chapter is structured as follows – the next section will discuss the call for new methodology in studying policy translation; the third section will discuss the dilemmas and issues which a researcher needs to consider in such work; and the fourth section will deal with three categories which help guide a researcher in the work of studying policy translation through ethnography. The final section will conclude the chapter.

New methodology for policy translation

Due to the historical links of policy translation with sociology and anthropology, some scholars have called for a greater use of ethnography in policy studies (Wedel et al. 2005; Peck and Theodore 2012). The anthropology of policy studies forms the ‘cultural and philosophical underpinnings of policy – it enables discourses, mobilizes metaphors, and underlies ideologies and uses’ (Wedel et al. 2005, 34). Critical ethnographies, it has been suggested, and such methods as ‘extended case study’, may shed light on the fluidity of the policy process and various translations within it (McCann and Ward 2012; Peck and Theodore 2012). On the other hand, there is also a greater focus on the language in studying politics as ‘policy is made in words’ (Freeman 2009, 431). Moreover, narratives are getting extra attention as they are powerful in framing the reality and structuring interactions (Mukhtarov and Cherp 2014; Mukhtarov et al. 2013; Lejano, Ingram and Imgram 2013). With the focus on these symbolic issues of politics, the key question is how to understand the policy process interpretively and yet make a useful contribution to the enterprise of institutional design (e.g. Mukhtarov et al. 2015; Thiel, Mukhtarov and Zikos 2015).

The broad framework of political ethnography is therefore useful in order to analyse policy translations, as discussed in Shore et al. (2011) and Schatz (2009). Within the broad theme of political ethnography, two recent proposals concerning the methods in studying policy translation warrant our attention: ‘mobile methods’ (McCann and Ward 2012) and the ‘extended case approach’ (Wedel et al. 2005; Peck and Theodore 2012). According to Büscher and Urry (2009), the research methods become mobile in two senses. First of all, they are mobile because researchers follow their subject to multiple sites and localities and therefore document the process of policy in the making and ‘on the move’. Second, the researchers pay attention to the moves in which policy makers participate, as in a game, where each event contributes to the development of another event and, as a result, a formation of a policy. Such ethnographic attention to policy making

as ‘piecing together’ multiple events that are responses to one another is a novel way of conducting policy research (Büscher and Urry 2009).

A closely connected approach was developed by Burawoy (2001, 2009) – an extended case study method, which Peck and Theodore (2012) further refined and called the ‘*follow the policy*’ method, that is, one that enables mutations in policy meaning to be traced by following various actors and their movements. A researcher looks for a place in cosmopolitan policy networks in order to observe how policy is made and how policy success is produced (Mosse 2006). The work of a researcher is not devoid of difficulties such as staying at a distance from those networks and not taking things at face value. Peck and Theodore (2012) suggest that there are four requirements when applying the extended case study method to the study of the travel of ideas. First, researchers must become participants as well as observers of the process they study. For a researcher who becomes part of a global policy network, it may be challenging to be engaged in the development and propagation of ‘best practices’, and at the same time preserve reflexivity and observe how the context influences ‘best practices’ being introduced in various countries. This speaks to the sociological tradition of participant observation (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012), but in a context where a researcher needs to reconcile conflicting identities and the roles of a reflexive observer and a policy advocate. Second, researchers must engage in a multiplicity of sites and have an ‘understanding of policy reinvention as a continuous, multisite “process”’. Such an approach calls for a questioning of the established models of the top-down diffusion of ideas, linear transformation and the centre-periphery travel of ideas; and, instead, suggests studying through multiple sites without trying to assign any hierarchical relationship between them. Third, researchers must be able to jump between the micro and the macro processes, between what is perceived to be both local and global. As Peck and Theodore (2012, 28) put it,

‘(f)ollowing the policy’, in this context, cannot be reduced to the relatively straightforward task of tracking norms, practices, and agents ‘downstream’ from sources of conspicuous authority, or outward from dominant centers of calculation; it must be multidirectional and it must span not only the spaces of intensive exchange but also those of contingent connection, marginalization, and exclusion. And it must also encompass not only the immediate local context of policy adoption – adaptation – implementation, but the ‘context of context’ . . . the positioning of experiments, failures, and alternatives within an understanding of the wider patterning of policy formations.

Finally, researchers must not be satisfied with proving theory in a certain case, but instead must select and design case study research in such a way that the most interesting cases of where theory may not stand valid are investigated. Burawoy initially referred to such an approach as a ‘kamikaze’ approach to theory development, which with all its drive for disproving theory at the same time works towards a new, reconstructed one itself (Eliasoph and Lichterman 1999).

Furthermore, McCann and Ward (2012) discuss the use of ‘mobile methods’ to study policy assemblages and mutations. These constitute ‘studying through’ as opposed to ‘studying down’, which is what occurs in traditional accounts of government public policy, and ‘studying up’, which is what transpires in emerging accounts of governance (Wedel et al. 2005). ‘Mobile methods’ include direct and participant observations, field-notes, oral histories and standard methods of policy analysis, including interviews and questionnaires.

Engaging in both ‘follow the policy’ and ‘mobile methods’ includes a particular form of political ethnography as the boundaries between the roles played by a researcher get eroded. As a result, a number of ethical and political challenges arise for a researcher, and these can be productively considered and discussed before the fieldwork to prepare the researcher. In the next section, I elaborate on such dilemmas and challenges in more detail. While the focus of this chapter is on ethnography as a methodology for studying policy translation, our discussion is relevant to those interested in methods for interpretive policy research more generally, such as intervention research (e.g. Daniell 2012), action research (e.g. Whyte 1991) and community-based research (Benoit et al. 2005). The discussion of ethical and political challenges is relatively scarce in the methodological literature applied to public policy and urban planning issues, and I hope to contribute to this literature by this discussion.

Ethical and political challenges in studying policy translation ethnographically

Anthropologists of policy or ethnographers of international development have discussed the political and ethical dimension of ethnography in the past (e.g. Mosse 2004; Wedel et al. 2005; Fujii 2012). For example, some of the chapters of the volume *Policy Worlds: Anthropology and the Analysis of Contemporary Power* discuss the politics and ethics of ethnography (Shore et al. 2011). Furthermore, both Joseph, Mahler and Auyero (2009) and Wood (2007) also discuss political ethnography and the issues of ethics and politics involved in it. These discussions, however, are largely confined to an audience of anthropologists and are virtually non-existent in policy studies and international relations. One exception is the book edited by Edward Schatz on political ethnography (2009) which also contains a number of chapters dealing with the issues of identity, reflexivity, positionality, dilemmas and challenges in such work (e.g. Pachirat 2009). Another notable exception is Clarke et al. (2015, 218), who proposed the ‘ethics and politics’ of policy translation connected the task of a researcher with the activity of an advocate and a practitioner (Mukhtarov et al. 2016).

Not only are the ethical and political issues under-represented in the methodological literature on policy processes, but a discussion of an ‘embodied’ character of such methodology and political research made prominent through ethnographic immersion has also been absent from this literature. Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012, 115–116) summarize the situation in the following passage:

(m)ethodological treatments, including the research design literature, irrespective of the methodological approach followed, have not yet taken on board the vast variety of researchers engaged in field and archival research. Where are the explicit engagements with race-ethnic issues in the field? Gender? Sexuality? Physical ability? Class? Is it as if the researcher body is (still) male, middle class, Caucasian-European, capable of unfettered physical mobility, and a-sexual?

It is of course impossible to cover all the potential dilemmas and issues which arise in the field and are related to the 'embodied' nature of researchers, the ways in which they understand the world and are seen by others. However, I would like to draw on a number of my personal experiences in the field as well as those of my colleagues in order to illustrate a number of key reasons/situations where a researcher engaged in political ethnography may encounter ethical and political challenges. I briefly outline these issues before I continue with possible ways of dealing with them.

First of all, an ethnographer studying powerful policy actors *in situ*, that is in their natural milieu, will inevitably struggle to remain at a distance and not fall under their influence (Peck and Theodore 2015). It may be hard for a researcher to learn to speak the language and grasp the symbolic repertoires of cosmopolitan policy actors engaged in the processes of transferring and modifying knowledge across various sights and borders. Perhaps the greatest challenge to avoid is getting caught in an 'in-group' mentality binding influential policy actors and others (Peck and Theodore 2012, 25). In the settings that we describe here, this challenge becomes one of learning enough to understand and effectively utilize the various layers of text that are being exchanged in communications, verbal and otherwise, and, at the same time, keep the psychological distance necessary for a balanced view and research. One example of such a danger comes from my experience of studying water policy making in southeastern Turkey in 2007–2008, when a powerful policy actor performed the function of a gatekeeper to many interviews and documents and supplied me with his own interpretation of various accounts of events. Not least, his support provided me with symbolic capital in that organization amounting to better relationships and access to data overall. A prolonged contact with such a powerful actor proved useful for access to data; however, it presented a danger of being brought into the sphere of his influence, not least the power of his narrative about the project. It is a political skill to strike the right sort of a balance between loyalty and dependence on one hand, and intellectual independence and critical attitude on the other. It is worthwhile to mention that such carefulness needs to be present at both the data collection stage during interactions with powerful actors, and at the stage of writing up when self-censorship may be a constraint. A related challenge that is present in the work of a policy ethnographer is the need for vigilance with regard to major hegemonic discourses and forms of knowledge which may obscure particularly salient concerns and questions and nudge a researcher to reproduce existing power relationships. While ethnographic research of policy translation does not

have to be counter-hegemonic by definition, a researcher would benefit from recognizing the ideologies present in the field and the dangers of reproducing dominant narratives in his/her analysis.

The second and closely related challenge occurs when researchers find it hard to provide critical accounts of policy work not because they have been 'charmed' and influenced by charismatic policy actors, but because they are afraid to potentially place a strain on valuable relationships with former or current clients, colleagues and friends (e.g. Mosse 2006). Unlike the previous dilemma, here the major conflict occurs between the desire of the researcher to be loyal, and fulfil the requirements of 'do no harm' to research informants and colleagues, and at the same time to be honest and comprehensive in accounting for events and stories. Mosse (2005) emphasized a particular sort of conflict that anthropologists of development (and aid) have – on the one hand they have an obligation to be critical and honest and provide alternative views on the subject matter privileging 'lived experiences', on the other they depend on new projects, good relationships with colleagues in the field and in centres where such projects are funded and drafted. Mosse quotes Little and Painter (1995, 605) in his argument that ethnographers of development failed to acknowledge as reflexive scientists that 'anthropology as a whole has helped produce and maintain, and continues to benefit from power relations on which development institutions and the discourses they generate rest'. This places a moral burden on those who pursue particular career paths in the anthropology of development and policy (Mosse 2005, 243). One example of such a conflict is the story of David Mosse in the aftermath of the publication of his book *Cultivating Development* (2005) about public participation in a development project sponsored by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in India. Mosse (2005), whose work has been severely criticized by colleagues, attributes the key reason behind such contestation of his account to his refusal to negotiate his narrative with informants and colleagues on the project. He writes that 'the ethnography failed to be what all good evaluations are, namely an acceptable story that mediates interpretative differences in order to sustain relationships and the flow of resources (Mosse 2006, 943). And such a narrative runs a danger of alienating funders, colleagues and friends, as well as endangering one's career in a highly competitive and cash-stripped field of humanities.

Third, a researcher always depends on gatekeepers to enter the field and gain access to data and support in their fieldwork. Perhaps such dependence is even stronger in authoritarian contexts where hosting institutions may feel threatened by the results of investigations. Researchers often learn to operate under the norms of 'obedient autonomy' when they have little choice but to agree with the client's or host's choice for what, in their view, is an inferior policy option, or an inferior site for data collection (Klotzbucher 2014). There is little that can be done about such power imbalances, and a researcher must agree to be limited in the scope of access in exchange for support, some access to data and trust from hosting actors. I encountered this dilemma during my fieldwork in southeastern Turkey when I felt that I was straightjacketed by a research assistant

to particular sites, and only introduced and represented to particular informants (Mukhtarov 2009; Mukhtarov et al. 2016). His behaviour may not have been driven by the desire to conceal information, or restrict my movement, but by the genuine desire to help by taking the initiative and control during site visits, but, nevertheless, such occasions constitute cases of restriction in the freedom of movement. Although it is perhaps inevitable to some extent, the influence of gatekeepers on research design needs to be negotiated and a researcher must make it clear, as much as it is possible, that this is *his/her project* and it is important that he/she retains freedom in making choices on where to go, which sites to visit and who to interview (Mukhtarov et al. 2016). This type of dilemma is especially common when researchers also engage in consultancy work, are institutionally dependent on their supervisors and have a tendency to apply self-censorship to what they produce (Stubbs 2014).

Fourth, ethnographers introduced to the field by a particular authority may 'receive highly customized lessons based on a highly partial version of policy success stories' (Pow 2014, 296). Pachirat (2009, 158) eloquently proclaimed that 'there were the ways in which my being seen would affect how and what I saw'. This has lately been studied in the literature on interpretive policy analysis under the label of 'positionality' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012; Mosse 2005). Mosse (2005), for example, claimed that in the last few decades, researchers have operated across multiple sites and worked with a plethora of actors – ingredients which greatly complicate the issues of positionality. An illustration of positionality from my work in Turkey was the special treatment I felt I received due to my ethnic background as an Azerbaijani, a linguistically and ethnically related Turkic nation, as well as the non-threatening status of a PhD student seeking opportunities to learn from the experiences of practitioners. A broader discussion of the issues around positionality of a researcher during fieldwork can be found in Cohn (2006).

Finally, there can also be misunderstandings, intentional omissions and miscommunications during the fieldwork caused by cultural differences. For example, the concept of freedom of speech is very different in the Netherlands compared to China, and the acceptability and manner of discussing certain policy issues in public or in private can show considerable cultural variety, as described by de Jong in his recollection of the Sino-Dutch cooperation project (Mukhtarov et al. 2016). An ethnographer needs to be aware of such limitations and opportunities and be reflexive and honest about the possible impact these may have on his/her knowledge claims (Cleary 2013; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012). This, as any other form of ethnography, requires a non-judgemental attitude towards the culture, worldviews and behaviour of the subjects under study. It is important to maintain constant cognizance of the 'contact zones' between cultures; and what is taken for granted has the potential to create many ethical and political tensions in the daily life and work of a researcher (Clarke et al. 2015; Stubbs 2014).

These challenges and dilemmas invite the further attention of researchers interested in anthropology of policy and policy ethnography. Such attention is

justified by the notion that prior consideration of dilemmas as well as possible ways of resolving them may prepare a researcher for fieldwork, although I recognize that no prior textbook or list of points of consideration would liberate a researcher from experiencing the ethical and political dilemmas of fieldwork. In the next section I discuss three key categories which may help a researcher to grapple with the politics and ethics of policy ethnography.

Researcher as a translator: reflexivity, positionality and normativity

Reflexivity in policy ethnography

First of all, a researcher needs to be reflexive about his/her physical, social and cultural background in conducting social and political research. This encompasses such issues as race, gender, sexuality, physical health, ethnicity, age and particular views and opinions, which may push a researcher towards some knowledge claims rather than others. This is broadly called *methodological reflexivity* in the literature on anthropology and social science methodology, and scholars consider it to be one of the most important considerations in judging the trustworthiness of interpretive research (e.g. Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012). Reflection may be directed to the background of a research project, at the stage of writing, but also during the fieldwork when making choices about whom to approach and how to deal with the information and knowledge collected.

One example of reflexivity is research design choices made transparent to the reader. In my own PhD research, the choices I made for case study selection (England, Turkey and Kazakhstan) had something to do with my own background as an Azerbaijani, who spent a part of his PhD at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom. Being limited in time, and interested in contrasting policy backgrounds, I chose to focus on three countries where I had best access as well as spoke the language. As a native bilingual Azerbaijani and Russian speaker, I also speak advanced Turkish, which has a close similarity with Azerbaijani. In addition, my proficiency in Russian made the case study of Kazakhstan attractive, and my base in England at the time of the research design, was an opportunity to engage with a case study in that country, also benefiting from the access provided by the 'brand' of Oxford. My research design choices, and indirectly knowledge claims, therefore, were partly conditioned by personal characteristics, the ability to speak the language and anticipation of access. Another example of reflexivity is presented by Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012), who cite Reinhardt (2009, 297) and her choices of sampling directed not by 'most different' or 'most similar' designs, but personal experience of research in Mozambique – 'I ended up spending the majority of my time with people who had shown they would respect my engagement [despite my fiancé's absence from the scene]'. These types of explicit connections between one's characteristics and background and knowledge claims in social science research enriches its trustworthiness through opening up to the reader the context of research in more detail.

Positionality in policy ethnography

Second, the researcher needs to be aware of and, if possible, to adjust, the way he/she is positioned in the field of political actors during the social and political research. In other words, the way a researcher is seen influences what and how he/she sees. This category is called *methodological positionality*. Jeremy Gould (2004, 7) defined positionality as:

the need for finding a serviceable and responsible way of situating oneself in 'the field', and is a threshold issue in all ethnography. In practice, positionality is not a problem, but serves as conceptual shorthand for a range of social, cognitive and ethical-political issues at the core of the ethnographic endeavor.

Timothy Pachirat gives an excellent example of positionality in gaining access to the research site: his mixed Thai-American background, age and personal outlook made it possible for him to get a job in a slaughterhouse in a Midwestern state of the US (Pachirat 2000). Another example of positionality, discussed mostly in relation to gaining rapport, is the study of climate change denial in everyday life conversations and situations in a small Norwegian community conducted by an American scholar. Norgaard (2011, 238) writes about how her Americanness may have influenced the way she was seen and the type of data and access she was given,

Features of life such as the fear of standing out and not speaking to strangers did not influence me so much as an American per se as they applied to me as a person who was unknown to the community members I spent time with. If anything, it seemed at times that my status as a foreigner exempted me from some of the suspicion I would otherwise have received, making it more normal for me to do and say some of the things that I did (because I was this type of outsider, I could hardly be expected to do things in the normal Norwegian or Bygdaby fashion). People explained things in more basic terms to me than I suspect they would to a native. As an outsider, I was a kind of cultural dope and thus less threatening.

Jeremy Gould (2004) distinguished between three kinds of positionality: spatial, social and normative. While many overlaps between these three exist, the distinction helps researchers to realize how their position may impact the data they collect and claims they make. Spatial positionality has to do with how people in various corners of the same 'site' or locality relate to a particular proposal or ideas, or the researcher. In the case of social positionality, the major point is access to data, the issues of trust between a researcher and informants and the power dynamics involved. And normative positionality has to do with the approaches to development or policy change in a particular setting which are shared by informants, powerful policy makers and citizens. In other words, and in line with the earlier discussion by Mosse (2005), the researcher must navigate the official

and unofficial narratives, identify the front and back stages and position him-/herself in this field normatively in such a manner that it allows both connection and critical reflection. The issues of positionality will most often emerge in the context of action research and policy ethnography which runs in parallel with policy or consultancy work, and this is a context which is rife with potential dilemmas and challenges. This brings us to normative issues in political ethnography more generally.

Normativity in policy ethnography

A researcher has particular normative inclinations and predispositions, which are inescapable and which influence the way a researcher engages with the research. If the pretences of objectivity and neutrality of a researcher are dropped, a researcher emerges as a human being with views, tastes, ideas and preferences, which often become explicit in research or influence research outcomes. This ‘embodied’ vision of a researcher, and the blending of advocacy and research has become a subject of much debate recently in the social sciences broadly, and is not limited to ethnography alone (e.g. Brandt 2007; Mukhtarov et al. 2016; Pasgaard et al. 2017). An enlightening discussion about the debate on research and advocacy appears in the epilogue of a meticulously researched book *The Cigarette Century* by Allan Brandt (2007, 494–495, emphasis added) who has gradually become involved in court proceedings in cases against big tobacco companies,

I saw no reason why a historian’s perspective would carry much weight in a courtroom, where the combat scarcely resembles the staid academic debates I had become accustomed to. It would be best for me to present my work not in the adversarial context of tort litigation, but in the form of a book, where I could lay out my arguments in detail. *I did not want my scholarship to be dismissed as “advocacy”*. The lawyers could use my work as they saw fit. I did not want to become a combatant in the tobacco wards; I much preferred my role as a war correspondent and military historian.

Thus, this dilemma also exists in historical and archival research which is non-ethnographic, but arguably becomes even more savvy in the context of political ethnography when a researcher, either during or after the research, may find him-/herself drawn into advocacy and a political struggle. *Methodological normativity*, therefore, revolves around the question of whether a researcher may also act as an advocate in particular policy issues, and whether a researcher needs to take a particular normative position in order to improve the quality of the research. Clarke et al. (2015) directly engage with the issue of the ‘ethics and politics’ of translation, by stating that translation researchers have an obligation to engage with the ‘praxis of translation’ through excavating and making visible alternative scenarios and futures of ‘policies otherwise’ as well as ‘not yet’. They powerfully sum up their argument for the politics and ethics of translation as follows:

In summary, 'policy otherwise' takes advantage of the ways in which policies are constructed, contested, contradictory and constitutive (Clarke 2004, 147) to explore 'the limitations, the refusals, the counter-tendencies, and the instabilities that constitute the conditions for *other* possibilities' (2004, 154). The importance of enlarging the possibilities of thought and action (2004, 157) throughout, not as a 'dislocated gesture at the end' (2004, 158) requires a commitment to both 'studying' and 'acting through' (Wedel 2004), if translation is to be given an ethical and political force.

(Clarke et al. 2017, 204)

In other words, the simple argument that policy researchers are at the same time policy actors and advocates, in the spirit of 'vita activa' of Hanna Arendt (1958), requires an additional sensitivity and transparency on the part of a researcher, before, during and after the fieldwork (see also Chapters 5 and 6 this volume).

Conclusions

In response to the growing need for ethnographic studies of the cross-boundary movement of planning and policy ideas and practices, the political and ethical challenges of such research need to be acknowledged and elaborated upon in academic communities of public policy and international relations. In this chapter, I described a number of occasions when ethical and political dilemmas may arise, and proceeded to discuss three key analytical categories which require attention from researchers in order, on the one hand, to prepare a researcher for the complexities of policy ethnography and, on the other hand, to engage with a methodological and theoretical discussion of what a new approach to policy may amount to (Kubik 2009). These three categories are *positionality*, *reflexivity* and *normativity*.

I proposed that policy ethnographers should consider four issues in designing and conducting fieldwork that are likely to give rise to political challenges and ethical dilemmas: (1) actors and their composition; (2) defining research questions; the theoretical approach, research methods, access to information and the language of communication and reporting; (3) the distribution of benefits and rewards; and (4) the assumed identity of the researcher (Mukhtarov et al. 2016). All four issues for consideration mentioned above have to do with the shifting roles of a researcher and the need for reflexivity and positionality in research design and implementation. The norms of reflexivity and positionality are particularly important for a researcher who wishes to remain transparent, honest, yet effective and focused. Furthermore, additional layers of complexity may be present, such as the context of development aid, the context of conducting ethnography in one's own country of origin and many others.

In all cases, and as Sultana (2007, 383) writes, 'being reflexive is important in situating the research and knowledge production so that ethical commitments can be maintained'. Klotzbucher (2014), in the context of his fieldwork in China, also argues that researchers may need to be 'obedient' and listen to governments'

or clients' requests, at the very least they need to be reflexive about their choices and the silences, or the policy options which could have been put in place otherwise and produce 'policies otherwise' (Clarke et al. 2015). And this notion of 'policies otherwise' has a strong normative charge to it, that of uncovering, problematizing and actively seeking counter-hegemonic narratives (Gould 2004; Mukhtarov 2016; Rojas 2007).

It is important to mention that considerations brought up in this chapter are based on some instances of participatory observation and policy fieldwork (e.g. in Turkey), which may not qualify as 'ethnography' in the classical sense of the word. My immersion in the field in Turkey was limited to two trips amounting to a cumulative time of 2.5 months. However, such experience was sufficient to identify and recognize some of the potential ethical and political issues involved in research and provoke a retrospective interpretation of the events in which I participated with the objective of offering useful insight. My point of departure in this chapter is that knowing about the importance of dilemmas and proper consideration of reflexivity, positionality and normativity in research design and implementation would help to prepare researchers to face these challenges. My goal with this chapter, therefore, is not to provide a 'how-to' guide for researchers, but rather to raise issues for reflection in individual situations and to facilitate the process of preparation, foresight and implementation of policy ethnography.

This chapter contributes to the relatively limited literature on the ethics and politics of ethnography, specifically in the cases of studying policy mobility and translation. This is a relatively new subject for the urban planning and public policy audiences, as well as for international relations scholars, and I hope to draw attention to these issues and stimulate more research and the sharing of personal research experiences, ethical dilemmas and political hiccups. I believe that in making methodological and policy literature more reflexive, scholars serve in providing a new yardstick for trustworthiness and transparency in research as a measure of its quality as well as transformation potential. And explicit and in-depth discussions of reflexivity, positionality and normativity provide great opportunities for both reflexive and transformational social science research (Fournier and Grey 2000).

Note

- 1 This chapter presents a significant rewriting of an earlier article by Mukhtarov et al. 2016 published in *Environment and Planning A* and entitled 'Political and ethical aspects in the ethnography of policy translation: research experiences from Turkey and China'.

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Part IV

Projects



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8 Europe in translation

Governance, assemblage and the project form

Richard Freeman

What is Europe? How is it being formed, and to what effect? The process is both pervasive and insubstantial, significant yet uncertain, both complicated and complex. As object of both research and policy – as something to know about and to engage with – ‘Europe’ is beset by ontological problems (Walters and Haahr 2005, Kauppi 2010, Zimmermann and Favell 2011, Carter, Freeman and Lawn 2015). What is it we are trying to explain and account for?

One of the ways of describing Europe – of making it available for and susceptible to thought and action – is to refer to it as a project. The illustrious Reflection Group, which reported in May 2010 to the European Council on the future of the European Union (EU), did so in terms of ‘Project Europe’ (Reflection Group 2010). Eighteen months later, the Friends of Europe’s high-level round table reported similarly on ‘Re-thinking the European project’ (Friends of Europe 2011). But what might this mean? What is the European project? More specifically – and referring more directly to our ontological problem – what is a project and how does it happen? What place do projects have in the ‘infrastructure’ (Voß and Freeman 2016) of European governance? What are their characteristics, qualities and attributes? Might we use an understanding of projects as a way of understanding a particular form of governance (Li 2016)?

One of the characteristics or functions of government as such is to define and manage the relations between things: between citizen and state, between different parts of the state, among groups and organisations, between territories and peoples. This chapter is concerned principally with how relationality is formed, maintained and sometimes dissolves in the process of conceiving, developing and implementing projects. For the work of the project is to draw things into relations with others, as the sociologists of translation would say.

In exploring the associations and translations the project makes, the chapter begins ‘on the ground’, in the everyday conception of the project as an organisational form, and as sponsored and developed by the Framework Programmes of the Directorate-General for Research.¹ It suggests we might think of the project as an assemblage, and identifies the dynamics of the assemblage in the processes of translation it realises and by which it is realised. It explores how policy is made in projects, using Commission initiatives in mental health as an example. What matters for its evolution, its success and failure, is the degree of alignment

between different elements – the strength and kind of relationality – the project achieves.

Programme governance: ‘a certain complexity’

European science, technology and innovation policies were originally developed in response to perceived US superiority in these areas (Banchoff 2002).² The first Framework Programme (FP), a consolidation of previous discrete initiatives, ran from 1984; by the end of the following decade (FP5 1998–2002), the Programme had become the third largest item in the EU budget, after the Common Agricultural Policy and the structural funds. Social science was introduced into the third framework for the purpose of technological ‘foresight’, and given the discrete function of ‘targeted socio-economic research’ (TSER) in FP4 (1994–1998) (Brine 2000, Wickham 2004). FP5 was more explicit in redirecting research to social problems according to ‘thematic programmes’; it sought greater interdisciplinary integration (Bruce et al. 2004), while also seeking to involve research users, mostly in industry, to a greater extent than previously (Roth and Küppers 2002). The formation and development of a ‘European Research Area’ has been a keynote of EU science policy since 2000: FP6, beginning in 2002, supported a smaller number of larger projects, introducing new mechanisms such as Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence (Luukkonen, Nedeva and Barré 2006) in order to do so.

With a total budget of over €50 bn FP7, which ran from 2007–2013, was both significantly larger than its predecessors and scheduled to last longer. It comprised five Specific Programmes designed to support and develop cooperation, scientific excellence, researcher mobility, research capacity and nuclear research; the largest of which was cooperation (€32.4bn), which was to foster ‘collaborative research across Europe and other partner countries through projects by transnational consortia of industry and academia’ according to ten topics or themes.³ Each Specific Programme was subdivided into several component programmes. Funding Schemes, meanwhile, included collaborative projects, networks of excellence, coordination and support actions and individual projects, while additional support was available for the training and career development of researchers, as well as research for the benefit of specific groups such as small and medium enterprises. As the Commission itself put it, FP7 was ‘quite naturally – of a certain complexity’.⁴

The programme, meanwhile, is a complex arrangement of complex arrangements or projects, and this complexity is recognised in the literature, if only in traces. In part, complexity is an attribute of function: given that innovation is a complex, non-linear process with emergent properties, Arnold, Clark and Muscio (2005) call for a systems perspective in evaluating the programme in order to take account of its low- and high-level goals, activities and impacts. Pohoryles identifies a degree of organisational complexity, in that each project involves several participant organisations, while each of those organisations may be involved in several projects (Pohoryles 2002). Luukkonen et al. (2006), using principal-agent

theory, note the complex demands on networks which must refer to several principals, describing order and change within them as an organic aggregation of individual decisions. The Network of Excellence is a hybrid and mutable form, likely to have typical network characteristics at its inception, but also likely to develop hierarchical features in order to manage its resources effectively and implement its programme of work. Meanwhile, although Peterson (1991) explained the origins of the FP in an emerging consensus among relevant networks in technology policy, he also noted the difficulty of explaining the ‘complex, eclectic and rapid’ (Peterson 1991, 287) development of the European Community as a whole.

This perception of the multidimensional complexity of projects and programmes reflects the ontological problem with which we began, not least because there is a sense in which we describe something as complex when we feel it is eluding adequate description. The problem is hypertrophic to the extent that things aren’t just complex, but multiply so. In Andrew Barry’s account of DG Research, a senior official concerned with the forecasting and assessment of science and technology captures this issue very well, arguing that:

We have to get away from the linear and hierarchical model of the infra-national, subnational, national and international and so on. To my mind there are now five major spatial and temporal systems [the city, the region, the national, the regional-continental and the global] which are not in a linear-hierarchical top-down or bottom-up relation to each other – they are overlapping using different temporal scales and different systems and connections.

(Barry 2002, 154, brackets in original)

Barry goes on to explore the ‘heterogenous arrangement of elements’ (2002, 143) which comprise the EU. But what results from the successive, partial, sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory, often merely tangential associations described here and elsewhere? What perspective might we take on this multinational, multidisciplinary, multilevel, multisectoral thing? On this thing which is itself designed to take perspectives?

Assemblage

The concept of *assemblage* has appropriately diverse intellectual origins. Most authors take its derivation from Deleuze and Guattari although, as John Phillips points out, the term *assemblage* is an imperfect translation of their original *agencement* (Phillips 2006).⁵ The philosophical sense of *agencement* refers to the way in which states of affairs and statements made about them come into being only in relation to each other; its literal sense in French is that of arrangement, of fitting or fixing. The significance of *assemblage* for social theory lies in the attempt it represents to simultaneously capture both structure and contingency (Marcus and Saka 2006, Venn 2006).⁶ *Assemblage* serves as a ‘relay concept’ between

theoretical precepts of structure on the one hand and complex systems on the other (Venn 2006, 107) or, as Marcus and Saka (2006) have it, between scientific and aesthetic versions of modernity. As they explain, an assemblage is the product or effect of the intersection of two or more open systems, each of which – both systems and assemblage – becomes apparent only in their intersection (Marcus and Saka 2006, 103).

A different inspiration comes more directly from Foucault, refracted through Science and Technology Studies (STS), by which an *assemblage* is simply an instrumental combination of people and things: Paul Henman cites Mitchell Dean to the effect that: ‘A technology of government is formed through an assemblage of different techniques of government, technical objects, actors, financial and other resources and “sociotechnical” forces’ (Dean 1996, 59; Henman 2006, 208). For Aihwa Ong, similarly, *assemblages* are ‘systems that mix technology, politics and actors in diverse configurations that do not follow given scalings or political mappings’ (Ong 2005, 338). As John Clarke summarises, the idea of *assemblage* ‘points to the practices that bring together multiple sets of ideas, apparatuses, personnel and practices into apparently coherent entities that function as ways of governing’ (Clarke 2012, 224).

But then in what sense is the European research programme an *assemblage*? We might readily understand it as a configuration of things, including people, artefacts, materials and organisations. And what work does the *assemblage* concept do? Its principal function is to define a space in which to think differently about European governance: a space in which what is heterogeneous, emergent and contingent is a starting point for theorisation, not a peripheral and special difficulty to be explained away. It names the multiscale contingency and complexity to which commentators point.

In this way, *assemblage* represents, first, a general invocation of another way of thinking and, second, an invitation to examine more closely the particularities of its realisation. To this end, William Walters (2002) enjoined EU studies to attend to inscription, that is not just to human action but to the texts and objects by and through which it is constituted: ‘(W)e should see the making up of Europe in terms of networks of people and things’, as he put it (Walters 2002, 92). But we might reach further and point to the significance of a specific social form, that of the project. For one way of asking ‘how assemblage happens’ is to ask where it happens, and part of the answer to that is in the institutional life of the project, a ubiquitous, almost taken-for-granted organisational form. To return to the problem with which this chapter began, the point is not just that it is in the project that the *assemblage* is constituted or realised in practice, but that it (the project) represents a way in which the questions prompted by ‘assemblage thinking’ might be operationalised for research.

Projects as translation processes

Let us think of a project as the pursuit of (i) a defined goal in (ii) a set period of time according to (iii) a specified budget, in such a way as to leave its process to

be flexibly determined by quasi-autonomous actors or participants. The archetype of the project as managerial instrument and organisational form is perhaps the Manhattan project of the early 1940s, a model taken up across the US aeronautics and defence industries in the 1950s and which found paradigmatic expression again in NASA's Apollo missions.

There are two literatures on projects, one established and managerial, and one emergent and more critical (Cicmil and Hodgson 2006). In combination, they generate a paradox, such that project management seems to consist in the application of universal, instrumental and technocratic procedures to what are necessarily unique, contingent, negotiated arrangements. Siebel, Ibert and Mayer (1999) describe projects as a way of managing the tensions and contradictions between rationalist and incrementalist approaches to planning; Hodgson (2004) as the adaptation of a bureaucratic form to a post-bureaucratic context. A degree of theoretical integration of these two positions is provided by casting them differently as aspects of complexity (Geraldi, Maylor and Williams 2011). This pertains to the organisational structure of projects and the managerial and other kinds of uncertainty associated with them, their evolutionary dynamics and the pace at which their action is initiated and unfolds and the varied socio-political interactions they comprise. All of this is to say that an ontological uncertainty about Europe (above) is echoed in an ontological uncertainty about projects. Further, it seems possible that it is not merely echoed in projects, but grounded in them.

A principal source of the enduring ambiguity of the project is what might be described as the 'multiple agency' it incorporates (Clegg et al. 2002). For present purposes, this multiplicity is multidimensional. The European project is necessarily multinational, drawing participants from different member countries. It may also be multiregional, to the extent that it includes actors from outside Europe; it is necessarily multilevel in its articulation of local, national and regional interests. It is invariably multidisciplinary, may focus on multiple topics or applications and will comprise multiple activities, such as research, training and product development. It is multisectoral, bringing together actors and interests from universities and other research organisations and, whether as co-applicants or users, participants from industry, government, health, welfare and the law.

It follows that much of the work of a project is to produce, establish and maintain connections across actors, interests, spaces and activities. This is what the *collaborative* project, the *network* of excellence, the *joint* initiative⁷ and support for *coordination* signify. Indeed, part of this work is to connect different elements of the FP itself: 'transversality' or linking between different themes or elements in a call was to be built into project design for FP4 (Brine 2000).⁸ And such connections are what the sociology of translation was intended to problematise and explore: 'What then is a sociologist? Someone who studies associations and dissociations, that is all, as the word "social" itself implies' (Callon and Latour 1981, 300; Freeman 2009).

Think of the natural history of the project. It begins in different places, in discussions among politicians, researchers, bureaucrats and interest groups which

inform a call for proposals, and in discussions among researchers anticipating that call, re-imagining themselves and their interests in terms of what it might contain. It begins, not least, in previous projects and programmes. It is revised almost before it exists, in further consultations with more researchers and prospective stakeholders. A proposal is made, which translates between those interests: selecting some, denying others, creating still others anew. It is submitted, reviewed, negotiated, revised again and approved, a number allocated and a name concocted.

Only then do research teams come together, and they do so to develop common ways of thinking and working. They argue about the definition of terms, about methods and purposes. They review literatures, drawing together the work of myriad others. They draft specifications, provisional agreements of what it is they are, separately but together, trying to do. At the same time, administrative arrangements of different countries and academic institutions, including tax and employment legislation, are articulated one with another. Tables of FTE (full-time *equivalent*) posts are produced.

In turn, those posts are advertised, curricula redrafted to fit them and applications made. Advisory groups and end-users are approached and enrolled. Researchers begin work, recruiting and interviewing respondents, encoding what they say in such a way as to make it comparable with others. They slowly make sense of their data, 'double-fitting' (Baldamus 1974) what they see with what they think, and with what their counterparts in other teams see and think. Their reports are reformatted to a common design, badged with a project logo and listed with a project number, like other reports from other projects. Reports are presented at seminars and conferences, and in 'feedback sessions' with user groups, public officials and others, in which findings are redefined and realigned, in which vocabularies are shared and mutate. At every stage of this process, participants are jointly bound by a managerial accounting regime comprising partners, major costs, work packages, timesheets and person-months, end-users, Gender Action Plans and socio-economic reporting. Claims are submitted, and budgets reconciled. In time, and long before it ends, new calls are made, and new projects conceived.⁹

Concepts of *assemblage* and translation seem to say much about a specific if significant area of European Commission activity, namely its support and development of research and innovation. In these fields at least, they seem to identify what is going on when 'Europe' is going on. And if they hold here, might they say something about European governance in other fields too?

Mental health policy in Europe

The origins of DG SANCO's Public Health Programme lie in its 1993 Communication on the Framework for Action in the Field of Public Health, which led to the establishment of eight action programmes. These were consolidated into a single Public Health Programme for the period 2003–2008, which funded over 300 projects and related actions and which was then succeeded by a Health Programme (2008–2013).¹⁰

The EU's mandate in mental health is derived from that for public health, as established at Maastricht and strengthened in Amsterdam; in fulfilling this mandate, it is obliged to cooperate with international organisations and must also 'fully respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care' (European Union 1997, 40). An identifiable trajectory of EU mental health work consists in a series of conferences convened under successive presidencies, a particular spike of activity around the publication of a Green Paper in 2005 (followed by the agreement of a Pact in 2008) and a sustained volume of background activity in projects and programmes, as well as certain other activities in fields such as employment and social affairs.¹¹ Much of this work is complementary to, and coordinated with, that of the World Health Organization's (WHO's) European Region (Freeman, Smith-Merry and Sturdy 2009 and 2012; Freeman 2012).

The European Commission and the World Health Organization

The Commission held a joint meeting with WHO on Balancing Mental Health Promotion and Mental Health Care in April 1999, in Brussels, and another in September 2001 on Future Mental Health Challenges in Europe, which addressed the impact of other policies on mental health. A second seminar on Future Mental Health Challenges in Europe, held in Luxembourg in December 2002, was concerned with strengthening cooperation between the EU and WHO.¹² It dealt more with substantive issues than with arrangements for joint working, though '[t]he need for compatible data' and 'the importance of disseminating information . . . were among the topics which were strongly underlined in the seminar' (p. 10). Meanwhile, a conference addressing the mental health issues associated with EU enlargement was held in Bilbao in October 2003, co-sponsored by the Commission and WHO Europe and jointly organised by the EC, STAKES (the Finnish National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health), the Department of Health of the Basque government and the University of Deusto.

WHO's Ministerial Conference on Mental Health in Europe took place in Helsinki from 12–15 January 2005, issuing a *Mental Health Declaration and Action Plan for Europe*.¹³ The conference was attended by over 450 delegates, observers and WHO Europe staff. Approximately half of the 52 Member States were represented by their health minister, and others by a ministerial delegate. Most countries also chose to include in their delegations psychiatrists and departmental heads with responsibility for mental health services. The participant list also included representatives from the Council of Europe, the European Commission and 'representatives of nongovernmental organisations in official relations with WHO'. Individual invitations to attend were extended to representatives of local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), service user and carer groups. These participants had the status of delegates, 'temporary advisors' or 'observers'. In this way, the conference demonstrates the extent to which governance entails the enrolment and alignment of multiple actors: these actors

are identified and listed in conference materials, and such listing signifies their enrolment.

The conference Steering Committee first met in 2002, and met every two or three months for two years after that, either in Brussels or Copenhagen. It was chaired by Gudjon Magnusson, Director of Public Health for WHO Europe and a former head of the Nordic School of Public Health. The Finnish project officers formed its nucleus, and recruited representatives of those who had organised successive (EU) Presidency conferences in Greece and Belgium. Members from Germany, Slovakia and the UK were added, being countries which agreed to sponsor additional 'pre-conferences', as well as representatives of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and Mental Health Europe. In this way, the architecture of the committee – and by extension the conference – was built up 'like a lego'.¹⁴ In turn, the conference itself brought relevant actors together, as one of our respondents observed:

The conference is collectively an amalgam of the impressions of the technical expertise, civil, lay and professional; the administrative layers of the health services in the member states and the directors of WHO . . . [Helsinki was] a convocation of visible representation.¹⁵

The Commission's Green Paper on mental health

The Commission had been co-organiser of the Ministerial Conference in January 2005, and issued its own Green Paper on mental health in October (European Commission 2005):

It was a very equal sharing . . . remember the Declaration also led to the EC choosing to develop a Green Paper on mental health . . . The Green Paper came *after* the conference in Helsinki, as an *outcome* of the conference.¹⁶

It (the Green Paper) argued for an EU strategy on mental health which would 'add value' by: creating a framework for cooperation between Member States, increasing the coherence of actions in different sectors, and establishing a platform for involving stakeholders in mental health policy making, including patient and civil society organisations. The document reviewed existing projects, studies, recommendations and reports, suggesting possible community-level initiatives.

In launching the Green Paper, Commissioner Kyprianou proposed a consultation process to develop an 'EU-strategy and action plan'.¹⁷ This took place in two parts: one 'open' and one 'structured'. The structured consultation was in turn composed of three elements: a dialogue with Member States; an EU 'consultative platform',¹⁸ and an 'interface between policy and research'. Each of these groups took part in joint meetings, which discussed issues of promotion and prevention (in Luxembourg, 16–17 January 2006); social inclusion and fundamental rights (Vienna, 16–17 March); information, data and knowledge (Luxembourg, 18–19 May) (SUPPORT project 2006).¹⁹ Reports of the consultation provide a useful

indication of the respective debates among relevant actors; by the same token, an actor is defined (and defines itself) as relevant by participating in such consultation processes. Taken together, these processes show just how and why translation cannot be simply asserted, but must be carefully cultivated and choreographed.

The open consultation drew 237 responses, from actors representing a range of interests, sectors and levels.²⁰ These included submissions from supranational and international organisations (the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, as well as WHO Europe), and from national and subnational governments. Health sector responses came from interest groups in the professions and industry, though the largest number was from NGOs (including patient and family groups, foundations and charities). Universities made 11 responses, and individual citizens 37. Many more responses came from the UK (60) and Germany (49) than from any other country (among those others, only Italy (12) and Finland (ten) made ten or more). Thirty-one submissions were made by European-level organisations.

Most responses to the Green Paper supported increased attention to mental health, specifically to mental health promotion while also noting a need for improvement in mental health care. Most welcomed the development of an EU strategy, though the need for it was questioned by the governments of France and the Netherlands; many national governments noted that health services remain with the competence of Member States. In an Opinion issued on 17 May 2006, the European Economic and Social Committee (2006) endorsed the development of an EU mental health strategy, while a European Parliament Resolution of 6 September 2006 (European Parliament 2006) called on the Commission to create a 'Mental Health Coordinating and Monitoring Group', and to 'follow up the green paper with a proposal for a directive'. Meanwhile, the report of the meetings which comprised the structured consultation (above) noted that an EU strategy had been strongly endorsed throughout, and concluded that:

The EU role should be to provide resources and support for the development of materials and tools for implementation, enable the exchange and sustainability of best practice, facilitate the use of existing networks to support cross sectoral approaches, to make connections with overarching EU priorities, to monitor progress.

(SUPPORT project 2006, 14)

In this way, it effectively summarised the work of translation and some of the tools with which it might be carried out. Soon, a specific institutional mechanism was designed to support it.

The Consultative Platform and SUPPORT

The Consultative Platform on Mental Health was an evolution of a previous EU Working Party on Mental Health, which had been made up of leaders of the various mental health projects financed under the Public Health Programme.

It now had a much wider membership of NGOs, occupational groups and peak associations, both specialist and non-specialist in mental health issues. Organised and supported by the EC and WHO Europe, it issued a document paralleling the commissioned reports of the consultation process.²¹ The eventual fate of the Platform is obscure. It was discontinued, or arguably never properly convened. Different respondents suggested that the interests it would have needed to represent were simply too diverse,²² or that convening it would have been too expensive. Others attributed a lack of interest in stakeholder and particularly user views to ignorance and prejudice.²³

Meanwhile, the continuing consultation process was facilitated by the SUPPORT project, which was funded by the 2003–2008 Public Health Programme and began work in March 2006, essentially to serve as additional administrative capacity for the Commission in mental health policy. The project consisted in a collaboration between the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health (SDCMH) (60 per cent), Finland's STAKES (38 per cent) and NHS Health Scotland (2 per cent); the Commission provided 60 per cent of its grant, while the SDCMH component was funded by the Scottish Government's National Programme for Mental Health Improvement. Its objectives were three-fold: to support the development and implementation of EU actions in mental health; to support the stakeholder platform; to promote the mental health aspects of EU actions undertaken in other initiatives and projects.

It was already becoming clear, however, that not all actors, both among Member States and within the Commission, were convinced of the need for an EU function or competence in mental health.²⁴ And without the prospect of a strategy, SUPPORT's projected programme of meetings, research papers and a website supporting practitioner communities seemed no longer viable. It resorted instead to 'some careful alliance-building amongst stakeholders to discuss an issue and what action may look like and feel like at an EC level'.²⁵

It did so by organising a series of expert seminars, which in turn were to generate and inform 'consensus papers'.²⁶ Consensus papers were put out to tender by research experts. An expert group identified both research experts and stakeholders; researchers led the development of the papers, with feedback from both the expert group and a wider group of stakeholders in what was an interactive, 'step-wise' process. Each began with an initial seminar, with further drafting and revision continuing by email.²⁷

The first seminar in August 2006, on well-being in the workplace, tried 'to pull together stakeholders' including the WHO and the ILO, as well as drawing on related Commission initiatives, including that on corporate social responsibility and the Framework Agreement on workplace stress. Facilitated discussions were introduced by short, five-minute 'stimulus presentations', while the context of the meeting provided opportunities for networking over meals. In this way, the meeting entailed a

collegiate way of involving stakeholders ... with DGSANCO in a DGSANCO building ... [which] pulled together 12–14 key organisations

and individuals over a 24-hour period, from lunchtime to lunchtime, gave them a chance to talk about what they were doing to the others who don't necessarily get a chance to hear about what the others are doing because they all exist in their silos, and then to spend time talking about how they coalesced or how the strands ran together and what therefore might be the key ways of moving forward.²⁸

Each meeting produced 'a report, a set of conclusions, some interesting things'.²⁹

A second seminar in November 2007 brought a similarly small group round a table to discuss children's mental health. Among 10–12 participants were university researchers and representatives of NGOs and other key projects and networks. A third meeting in December 2007 brought together 22 projects related to mental health from different European funding streams. Each made a stimulus presentation which suggested possible actions likely to find consensus, from which a 'consensus document' was derived.

Consensus papers were written for whatever decision-making process was to follow the Green Paper. Their function was to pool knowledge from projects. Projects deliver 'content and context' to policy makers, though they do so according to their own themes and frameworks; 'somehow they have to be brought together'.³⁰ Their outputs (arguments, papers) cannot be presented directly to Member States but have to be processed and synthesised. This is the work of consensus papers, which 'develop structures of the themes into which these projects can fit, and where they have their place'.³¹

The tools and materials of translation work might sometimes be administratively and technologically highly sophisticated, taking the form of voluminous and elaborate contracts, accounting systems and databases. But they have their common root, and still their most consistent form of expression, in the mundane practices and artefacts of policy making, which is in documents and meetings (Noordegraf 2010). Translation is routinely achieved on paper, in the drafting and redrafting of documents, and in the meetings which must take place for those documents to be both written and acted upon (Freeman and Maybin 2011).

An EC project: Implementing Mental Health Promotion Action

Meanwhile, European Commission projects continued. For example, a first phase of the Implementing Mental Health Promotion Action (IMHPA) network, co-financed by the European Commission, the Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports and Finland's STAKES, had run from 2003–2005.³² IMHPA initiatives informing the WHO's Ministerial Conference included a database of evidence of the effectiveness of mental health promotion, and a policy guide (Jané-Llopis and Anderson 2005). A second phase of the project (2005–2008) was funded jointly by the European Commission and the Department of Health of the regional government of Catalonia, Spain (IMHPA 2008). It brought together country partners, network partners and individual consultants: country partners included 26 EU Member States, Norway and Turkey; other partners

included the networks International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE), European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP), the WHO European Network of Health Promoting Hospitals (ENHPH) and the Mental Health Economics European Network (MHEEN), as well as WHO Europe. A further six individual

expert partners were expected to attend and contribute their personal knowledge and expertise to all general partner meetings, as well as any relevant work package meetings. There was also active e-mail communication between the experts and the project management team on many Imhpa products.

(IMHPA 2008, 10)

Members of the project management team were based in Copenhagen, Barcelona and Nijmegen, and the project met in both general and specific task-oriented meetings. Its work was organised in seven different strands or work packages: these included an expansion of a database (developed in the first phase) of mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention programmes and policies; the production of an information system and training manual on advocacy skills for mental health, and the development of indicators of Mental Health Impact Assessment. They also included the development of a data collection tool for an economic model of mental health promotion. This entailed collaboration with the second phase of a parallel European Commission funded project, the Mental Health Economics European Network (MHEEN II).

Work packages 1 and 4 comprised the development of an information system on mental health promotion infrastructures (also piloted in the IMHPA's first phase), and the production of country reports describing mental health promotion in different national contexts. The design of a survey instrument and accompanying glossary and guidelines entailed another collaboration, now with *HP-Source.net*, 'a voluntary, international collaboration of researchers, practitioners and policy makers, having the common goal to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of health promotion policy, infrastructures and practices'. Questionnaires were completed by 'country coalitions', groups of experts from different sectors which met to discuss and agree responses. These were then compiled and made available as a database, but also issued as a collection of 'country stories' (Jané-Llopis and Anderson 2006).

Work package 7 consisted in the organisation of the *European Conference on Mental Health Promotion and Mental Disorder Prevention* held in Barcelona in September 2007.

The idea was that discussion, sharing practices and providing a support network for prevention and promotion in mental health would further encourage development, implementation and working together across Member States and support the ongoing implementation of the WHO Action Plan, the EC Green Paper on Mental Health and future European initiatives in this arena.

(IMHPA 2008, 44)

And so translation appears as the end as well as the means of policy making. The connections forged in policy making are also those of its realisation and implementation, of the immediate and practical ways in which, through projects, initiatives are developed and realised across time and space. Projects turn on the creation of specific tools – IMHPA's databases and information systems, guidelines, indicators, survey instruments and training manuals – which create and sustain common interests. They culminate in meetings, in coming together, that is in assembly, an assembling which stands for the assemblage.

Translation and alignment

At the end of 2007, Commissioner Kyprianou announced a high-level conference, to take place in June 2008 in Brussels, and to establish a cross-sectoral *European Pact for Mental Health*.³³ The Pact called for action in five priority areas: the prevention of depression and suicide, mental health in youth and education, in the workplace and among older people and combating stigma and social exclusion. As the text explains:

The reference context for the Pact is the EU-policy acquis on mental health and well-being that has emerged through initiatives across Community policies over the past years, together with the commitments which Member States' Ministers of Health made under the WHO Mental Health Declaration for Europe of 2005 and relevant international acts such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

(p. 5)

In this way, the work of the Commission's projects and programmes in public and mental health provides plentiful, diverse evidence of translation at work. Its dual aspect is worth emphasising here: actors are both identified and connected at one and the same time. They are identified because they encounter each other, abut one another, rub against each other and become aware of their differences and commonalities in the course of their interaction. National and subnational governments and agencies, international organisations, NGOs, service providers and peak associations, activists, academic and professional networks and individual consultants and experts are brought together in meetings and projects in rooms at conferences, workshops, summits and seminars, around tables at which views, and with them identities, interests and purposes are negotiated and exchanged (Freeman 2008). The connections between them are made in the course of 'initiatives', 'networking', 'recruitment', 'endorsement' and 'convocation'. This is where governance happens, in the interstices between actors and agencies: it is the role of the Commission to support, enable, facilitate, translate.

Sometimes, these connections or relationships seem to solidify, to find more material organisational form. Conferences are in fact multilateral, multilevel collaborations: such relationships are remade in projects such as SUPPORT and IMHPA. Projects draw together different kinds of authority (experts, agencies,

activists, representatives of regional and national governments, international organisations and supranational bodies) in puzzling over common issues. Projects are aggregated into clusters and again into larger, looser assemblies, such as the mental health summit convened in Brussels in December 2007.³⁴ Projects are 'translation machines': formed to design and deliver scientific and administrative technology they are themselves technologies, a specific kind of political machinery slowly serving to redefine the spaces and practices of European governance (Barry 2001).

In all these ways, European governance appears to work through the institution of projects, alliances and platforms, diffuse sets of actors which seem to defy categorisation. They may be literally nameless, identified instead by acronyms and neologisms, arrangements of letters and syllables that testify to their artificial, composite status. They may be more or less virtual, in the sense that their clearest organisational expression is on a website. They are difficult to define not least because their configuration, function and purpose are emergent: to the extent that they are characterised by their flexibility and very formlessness, they may be defined best by their lack of definition.

Alignment

The argument of this chapter has been that the project is defined by its translations, that is by sets of relations or associations between its members or components. Following Deleuze and Guattari, it becomes possible to recognise the accumulation of translations as an assemblage. In turn, the fate of the assemblage draws attention to the specific qualities of its translations. In concluding, it might be noted that, if the peculiar properties of the assemblage can be explained only in terms of its translations, that is by the practices by which it is put together, then their success and failure might be assessed in terms of 'alignment'.

For the work of the project is to translate, and the work of translation is to produce alignment: the project mobilises people, materials and organisations, but it mobilises them *in relation to each other*. Disordered mobilisation, the cellular, autonomous behaviour of multiple agents, would have no sense (neither meaning nor direction). Meaningful mobilisation, or alignment, is created in relating actors to each other through their joint activity.

Returning to our case material of mental health policy in Europe, note that the grammar of the assemblage is in joint meeting, joint working, consultation, collaboration and 'pulling together'. Its vocabulary, however, is that of consensus, of 'compatible data', the 'coherence of actions' and 'consensus documents'. It is expressed in statements, opinions, speeches, recommendations, declarations, papers, pacts, reports and websites, translation devices which synthesise and consolidate while at the same time opening themselves to multiple interpretations, uses and reuses.

Alignment of this kind doesn't just happen; it is a fragile, ephemeral achievement. In Callon's formulation, 'A successful process of translation . . . generates a shared space, equivalence and commensurability. It *aligns*. But an unsuccessful

translation means that the players are no longer able to communicate' (Callon 1991, 45, italics in original). Think of the way the Commission's Green Paper on mental health (above) resulted not in further strategic action, but in no more than a 'Pact'. Its work was beset by uncertainty and disagreement over what was meant by 'mental health': mental health cast as mental *health* would have been in line with the Commission's established competence in public health and health promotion. But the referent of 'mental health' in the Green Paper was as much mental ill-health as mental health, and this seemed to challenge Member States' competence for health services. Meanwhile, projects continue, searching for new constructions of mental health governance. In this way, the project serves as a way of moderating if not removing the *telos* of government (Haahr 2004): a means of continuing to act while the purpose or outcome of action – and even the nature and identity of actors – remains undetermined.

Acknowledgements

The research reported here was undertaken in the course of *KNOWandPOL: The role of knowledge in the construction and regulation of health and education policy in Europe: convergences and specificities among nations and sectors*, project 0288848-2 funded by the European Commission under its 6th Framework Programme. The project is reported extensively at www.knowandpol.eu. Views expressed here are my own, not those of the Commission.

Earlier versions of this chapter were delivered in the seminar series *Practising EU government: problematisation, mobilisation and legitimation* at the Europa Institute, University of Edinburgh, 9 October 2009; to the Innovation in Governance Research Group, Technische Universität Berlin, 1 March 2012 and at a workshop *Rethinking the 'social', making up 'publics'*, Open University, London, 21 May 2014. I am grateful to their respective convenors and participants, as well as to John Clarke, Christophe Dubois, Mark Hellowell, Jo Maybin, Jen Smith-Merry, Paul Stubbs and Steve Sturdy for their comments, advice and support. As before, responsibility for the information and argument presented here remains my own.

Notes

- 1 The Directorate-General for Research was renamed the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation at the beginning of 2011.
- 2 The standard account of the early development of European research and technology policy is John Peterson's (Peterson 1995; Peterson and Sharp 1998).
- 3 http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/understanding/fp7inbrief/structure_en.html, accessed 6 November 2016.
- 4 http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/understanding/fp7inbrief/what-is_en.html, accessed 6 November 2016.
- 5 The formative presentation and reworking of Deleuze and Guattari, especially in relation to complexity theory, is that by Manuel De Landa (2002, 2006).
- 6 'The problem for theory, is that of thinking structure as well as multiplicity and indeterminacy within the same theoretical framework' (Venn 2006, 107).

- 7 FP7's Joint Technology Initiatives, linked to the Commission's European Technology Platforms, were essentially public-private partnerships formed at European level; http://ec.europa.eu/research/jti/index_en.cfm?pg=home, accessed 6 November 2016.
- 8 Similarly, additional funding for 'accompanying measures' in FP5 was designed to integrate the work of several projects in a 'cluster' (Wickham 2004).
- 9 For a more extended and reflective, personal account of the management of a European project, see Ettore (2000).
- 10 http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/2008-2013/index_en.htm, accessed 6 November 2016.
- 11 For an authoritative account of the Commission's mental health work in relation to standard conceptions of EU policy making, see Kelly (2008, 67). My purpose here is to make different sense of what he analyses in terms of 'the "garbage can" model of decision-making, characterised by the existence of problematic preferences, unclear terminology and fluid participation among relevant actors'.
- 12 Future Mental Health Challenges in Europe: Strengthening Cooperation between EU and WHO, seminar in the European Commission, Luxembourg, 11–12 December 2002.
- 13 WHO Europe (2005) *Mental Health Declaration for Europe*, WHO EUR/04/5047810/6, Copenhagen: WHO Europe; WHO Europe (2005) *Mental Health Action Plan for Europe*, WHO EUR/04/5047810/7, Copenhagen: WHO Europe; WHO Europe (2005) *Mental Health: Facing the Challenges, Building Solutions. Report from the WHO European Ministerial Conference*, Copenhagen: WHO Europe.
- 14 Interview, 3 March 2009.
- 15 Interview, 23 July 2008.
- 16 Interview, 30 July 2008.
- 17 Kyprianou, M. (2005) 'Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union', speech, launch of Green Paper on Mental Health, reference: SPEECH/05/637, Luxembourg, 24 October.
- 18 A 'platform' was described by one respondent (interview, 16 October 2008) as an 'EU English' word, and refers to a mechanism of stakeholder representation. Similar platforms have been established in other areas of public health policy, such as obesity.
- 19 The consultation process is extensively documented at http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/policy/eu/green_paper/index_en.htm, accessed 6 November 2016.
- 20 European Commission Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General, Directorate C – Public Health and Risk Assessment, C4 – Health Determinants (2006) *Responses to the Green Paper: Promoting the Mental Health of the Population. Towards a Strategy on Mental Health for the European Union*, Luxembourg, 19 December 2006.
- 21 *Report and Recommendations of the EU Consultative Platform on Mental Health. Response to the EC Green Paper COM(2005)484*.
- 22 Interview, 4 March 2009.
- 23 Interview, 3 March 2009.
- 24 One respondent reported a senior Commission official attributing this to simple discrimination 'at the political end' (interview, 3 March 2009).
- 25 Interview, 16 October 2008.
- 26 www.supportproject.eu/aboutsupport/activities/events/events.htm, accessed 2 March 2009.
- 27 Interview, 4 March 2009.
- 28 Interview, 16 October 2008.
- 29 Interview, 16 October 2008.
- 30 Interview, 4 March 2009.
- 31 Interview, 4 March 2009.
- 32 www.genclat.cat/salut/imhpa/Du32/html/en/dir1660/doc11678.html, accessed 6 November 2016.
- 33 *European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being*, EU high-level conference Together for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Brussels, 12–13 June 2008. The conference took its

title from the health strategy adopted by the Commission in October 2007, Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008–2013.

- 34 www.supportproject.eu/aboutsupport/activities/events/projects-summit07.htm, accessed 16 July 2009.

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9 Translation and the challenges of supranational integration

The common grammar and its dissent

Noemi Lendvai-Bainton

Introduction

Translation, as a theoretical and conceptual lens, offers a radically new perspective on how we could best conceptualise European Union (EU) integration as a unique ‘beast’. While mainstream, (largely International Relations (IR)-based) theorisation of supranational integration of the EU has been both assertive, confident and expanding, as well as fragile and increasingly narrowing and strait-jacketing. Especially in the context of Brexit, it is also increasingly evident that new forms of theories are needed to capture this process. This chapter will build on the politics of translation as an insight into the construction of the ‘common’, its grammar and subsequent dissent against it. The chapter will take two vignettes from Hungary to interrogate this common grammar and its dissent – one dating back to post-Accession Hungary (2004–2008) and the other looking at post-crisis and post-2010 Hungary. I will demonstrate how a translation perspective is able to shed light onto the complex processes of the ‘unfit to fit’, learning and unlearning, the crisis of the common and the challenge to an assumed consensus on the ‘common values, norms and visions’.

Translation: theoretical reflections

Etymologically, translation means a ‘carrying across’ or ‘bringing across’. The Latin *translation* is derived from the past participle, *translatus*, of *transferre* (*trans* means ‘across’ and *ferre* means ‘to carry’ or ‘to bring’). For translation studies scholars then, translation is the general term that refers to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language (source) to another (target). While translation is almost exclusively understood in linguistic terms in EU studies focusing on language rights and the role of translation in communicating in a multiple language context, there is a growing literature that takes language and translation more broadly and interrogates issues of linguistic justice (Van Pijls 2016), the role of language in constructing policies (Beland and Petersen 2015), and the EU English and its discursive constructions (Barbier 2012). Translation in this chapter will build on linguistic insights and origins, but will expand the term to include political and cultural dimensions that concern not only the translations of languages but of

cultural contexts between different countries, cultures, social and political systems. Translation is taken to interrogate both the 'trans' (as 'in-between' and 'across') and the 'ferre' (as carrying and bringing), as key processes at the heart of the EU integration project. The EU is a unique supranational project which is at its core a continuous and ongoing translation, 'transing' between languages, Member States, institutions, between national and supranational policies, norms, values and worldviews – a space deeply in between. 'Transing' and translation also raise important questions of translatability, mutual intelligibility, sociology of silences as well as of the discursive construction of the common and of sameness/difference. 'Transing' also sheds light onto the hidden manipulations, mediations, appropriations and the play of hegemonically constructed structures. Even for translation studies scholars, it is clear that translation is the creation of new cultural and political maps, the establishment of shared territories and of points of articulation. Hence translation is a process of metamorphosis, where the task of the translator is to unfreeze shapes that thought has assumed in one language and then to refreeze them in another. This 'refreeze' however is taking place in an implicit play of ideology and hegemony (Shodhganga 2016).

Translation then is a form of displacement, which operates in multiple social realities. As Sapir argues '[n]o two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached' (1958, 69). Translation then is a constant negotiation, transformation and displacements of these distinct worlds, which is relational, multiple, political and performative. Translation as a displacement is a strong theme for the sociology of translation, which emphasises the radical uncertainty of the translation process.

Translation is also *relational* – 'a political act where translation works across different cultures and unequal, always negotiated relationships' (Palmary 2011, 101). For the linguist Monti (2009), translation implies an intercultural and inter-lingual negotiation. For the postcolonial scholar Pratt, this negotiation condenses in contact zones – that is in 'social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination' (Pratt 1992, 4). For Pratt, the relationality of contact zones is also performative, where the encounters are often improvisational and unexpected. Apter (2006) captures relationality and sites of in-translation as a 'translation zone'. She argues that

[i]n fastening on the term "zone" as a theoretical mainstay, the intention has been a broad intellectual topography that is neither the property of a single nation, nor an amorphous condition associated with postnationalism, but rather a zone of critical engagement that connects the "l" and the "n" of transLation and transNation.

(Apter 2006, 5)

The relational shred also enables me to reconfigure a diffusionist account of policy transfer (Lendvai and Stubbs 2007), where, within the epistemic modernism of

mainstream policy studies it is assumed that 'A' is the original, 'B' the copy and policy transfer takes place from A to B. Policy transfer here is one-directional; the task of 'B' is to mimic, emulate and copy 'A'. 'A' is often considered to be the 'leader', and importantly, institutional isomorphism is assumed (for an overview of policy transfer literature see Dobbin, Simmons and Garrett 2007). In contrast, a relational notion of policy translation collapses the distinction and directionality between 'A' and 'B'. Rather than policies travelling from 'A' to 'B', 'A' being the original, preformed, readable and 'B' being the reader and the downloader, as policies travel, policy translation takes place between A and B, with multiple lines of influence, as a negotiated, uneven, unequal and improvisational encounter. The relationship between A and B is also articulated in and through connections with other nodes creating complex assemblages of policy dynamics.

Translation also draws attention to *multiplicity*. Influenced by the mobility turn, globalisation studies had produced a wealth of insights into the immense velocity, force and depth of global interconnectedness. Nowadays, it is a common argument to envisage 'fast policy transfers' (Brenner, Peck and Theodore 2010; McCann and Ward 2013), the 'proliferation of portable, technocratic policy tools' (Peck 2010) carried through 'global knowledge networks', and 'key knowledge institutions' (Stone 2002, 2012). For Mosse (2008), globalisation has fostered the rise of global policy agendas centred on the adoption of a particular set of 'travelling rationalities' such as the general applicability of technicalised knowledge. These rationalities have claimed important currencies that have enabled them to travel internationally between countries and contexts, and to 'flow'. The powers of fast policies and policy mobilities have mostly been assigned to their portability, structured disciplinarity and to their associated networks of powerful agents. Importantly, mainstream policy transfer literature has relied heavily on new sociological institutionalism that has emphasised institutional isomorphism and homogenisation as a result of diffusion (for a critical overview see Beckert 2010). What we might call the 'illusion of similarities' had an important role in driving institutionalism in assuming, discovering and reinforcing isomorphism. The 'illusion of similarities' is also coupled with a widespread belief amongst IR scholars that policy diffusion rests upon 'norms', yet conceptually norms are undefined and unexplored both conceptually and empirically (Towns 2012). Critically, the task here is the unpacking of the assumed singularity of underlying norms, content, effect and work of moving policies, not least because translation implies multiplicity of policies, as policy travels across languages, sites and scales, it is produced, assembled and populated differently. Originally, in the sociology of translation, developed by Bruno Latour, the notion of 'immutable mobiles' (Latour 1987) aimed to capture the processes by which objects transferred from one practice to another, have profoundly transformative effects. For Andrew Barry (2013, 2) 'translation implied both movement in space and the transformation of space', where 'translation gives new life to a text in other times and places' (2013, 3). Law and Urry (2004) argue that social scientists need to re-imagine themselves, their methods and their 'worlds', in which the multiplicity, 'more than one, but less than many' is produced through diverse and

contested social and material relations. In translation studies, conceptualising the anisomorphism of languages has been a key driver of critical scholarly debates (Tymoczko 2006). Translation then, directs us towards the 'unfit to fit', in which assumed similarities and commonalities are questioned. It is in this process that singularity and the 'common' breaks down, and Escobar's 'pluriverse' (Escobar 2012) becomes meaningful and alive.

Translation is also deeply and inevitably *political*. The politics of translation, informed by a variety of disciplinary debates in the field of cultural studies, postcolonial studies and critical translation studies, departs from the notion that translation is a simple matter of communication and transfer in a singular epistemological and ontological world. The political is important, because both the relational and the multiple imply unequal, uneven relations and negotiations as policies move. The political is also attentive to both translation and non-translation – that is the production of voices as well as silences (Tymoczko 2006), thus visibility. The political is also the interrogation of what Tymoczko calls the epistemic dimension of translation, that is how translation not merely reflects existing knowledge but rather is a form of knowledge production itself, where translation is a text about text, a form of 'metatext' (2006, 447). Translation is also political as it is 'a significant medium of subject re-formulation and political change' (Apter 2006, 6), or as Tymoczko (2006, 459) reminds us 'translation has a potentially radical and activist edge, that is driven by ethical and ideological concerns, that it participates in shaping societies, nations, and global culture in primary and central ways. Translation can change the world.' The political in translation is also captured by Bourdieu and Wacquant, when they argue that:

linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power through which relations of force between the speakers and their respective groups are actualised in a transfigured form. Consequently, it is impossible to elucidate any act of communication within the compass of linguistic analysis alone. Even the simplest linguistic exchange brings into play a complex and ramifying web of historical power relations between the speaker, endowed with a specific social authority, and an audience, which recognises this authority to varying degrees, as well as between the groups to which they respectively belong.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 142–3)

Enactment and embodiment also forms key aspects of translation. The performative turn, which has long been neglected by mainstream policy studies (Gottweis 2007), works with a notion of a 'lived and embodied conception of "doing" rather than interpreting or implementing policy' (Newman 2013, 526). It also implies that 'the political process is not merely a matter of interests and/or arguments, politics constantly needs to be *enacted* and a policy process understood as a multiplicity of staged performances' (Hajer 2005, 446, emphasis in original). As policy worlds are performed, policies 'are mediated and translated, refused, inhabited or reworked by those they summoned' (Newman 2013, 527). The performative also implies a simultaneous dynamics of creativity and constraints, activism

and incorporation, retreat and proliferation. It is also a world with ‘multiple spaces of power and resistance with which actors engage – pragmatically as well as politically’ (Newman 2013, 527). The performative is important, because it reconfigures some of the taken-for-granted notions of policies, such as intentionality, rationality, consequentialism and directionality. As Hajer (2005, 449) asserts ‘performing not only co-determines which rules are followed in the process. It also co-determines which definition of reality is followed, what temporal-spatial frame is seen as “appropriate”, and what constitutes a “legitimate intervention”.’ The performative also cross-cuts ‘illusions of order’ and an assumed consensus of policies, what I will call later ‘the consensus on consensus’.

Translation and EU English: reflection on a meta-lingual language

While we largely take for granted the language of EU integration as an unproblematic and rather technical sphere of communication, EU English is far from unproblematic. Stripping away the taken-for-granted is one of the most important types of work that translation does. Every time we translate, there is a need to stop and pause; to be meaningful, we have to ask the most basic of questions. For Spivak, translation is, ‘where meaning hops into the spacy emptiness between two named historical languages’ (Spivak 2000, 313). This ‘spacy emptiness’ seems a very meaningful metaphor for understanding translation. Translation for Spivak is the work of agency, where ‘there is also that special relationship to the staging of language as the production of agency that one must attend to’ (2000, 320). Here, for Spivak, translation is an immense cultural work involving both an ‘act of intimate reading’ as well as surrendering to the text and responding to its special call. For Spivak, the act of translation is also deeply political: for her, translation

remains dependent upon the language skills of the majority What one overlooks is the sheer authority ascribed to the original. The status of a language in the world is what one must consider when teasing out the politics of translation.

(2000, 321)

As such, translation is not an act of equals ‘it is only in the hegemonic languages that the benevolent do not take the limits of their own often uninstructed good will into account’ (2000, 321). It is through this spacy emptiness, which is at once both productive and constraining, that the deeply political nature of translation can be captured.

The hegemony of ‘policy English’, ‘global English’, or ‘EU English’ has long been recognised (Phillipson 2008; Pennycook 2003). For Vareine (2015) ‘Brussels-English’ or ‘Eurospeak’ is a language in itself, with its own words and sentence structures. Its lexicon is very much inspired by French, with words like ‘normalities’, ‘specificities’, ‘rapporteur’, ‘actors’ and ‘comitology’. Its sentences can be

long and convoluted, as is more traditional in German. Koskinen (2008) argues that EU English has very particular features, where the so-called 'Euro-jargon' can be characterised by excessive buzzwords, fuzziness, abstract style, neologisms, specialised bureaucratic vocabulary and complex sentence structure. However, as Koskinen asserts, translation is not simply a technical matter, it has rather important implications for policy – the ways that linguistic resources are employed, mobilised or discarded affect the relationship between the reader and the writer. Crucially, the implications are that translation not only conveys policies, but silently crafts hierarchies, constructs relationalities and hides assumptions. Translation as such does not transmit or transfer, but makes, produces and imposes policies. This awkward and strange EU English carries through a lot of different kinds of work. Importantly, it produces the illusion of monolingualism and creates the grammar of the 'common' and the 'one'. This language is crafted and refined in a way that actively produces both inclusion and exclusion. As Barbier argues:

[w]hile national elites can perfectly well able to speak to each other (in English) in European Commission meetings and understand each other in a functional (and superficial) way, they cannot do so when they compete in their respective electoral arenas, where the tone, language, substance and political culture change.

(2013, 111)

Somewhat against Sapir's argument above, Blichner argues that EU English is a meta-lingual language which is defined as based on continuous deliberation and common worldviews fostered by different key concepts in different languages having similar meanings and 'when several such concepts are linked together with a common point of reference, we may speak of a meta-lingual language' (2004, 6). For him, EU English is uneven insofar as the economic language is much more developed than its political language. Blichner argues that within this meta-lingual language a common interpretive grammar is emerging, where common understanding is possible. For him, '[a]s history shows speaking the same native language does not automatically assure readiness, and speaking different native languages has not always been a decisive hindrance to understanding' (Blichner 2004, 5). This implied 'unreadiness' will be picked up again later on in this chapter.

Common grammar and dissent: the case of Hungary

The common grammar of social policy

The building of common EU social policy has been a continuous effort of promoting a cognitive and normative harmonisation of social security reforms in Europe through the enforcement of a *common* language, a *common* vision of reforms and *common* objectives (Cerami 2008, emphasis added). The grammar of the 'common' is a key discursive frame for EU social policy. The European

'common space' over time has become progressively a more highly technicalised policy space, what Lewis and Mosse (2006) call a 'techno-managerial order', crowded by best practices, common indicators, policy targets and guidelines, transposition of strategic priorities and peer reviewing, leading to 'the deepening of knowledge' (Frazer and Marlier 2010). The grammar of the common features a language that is awkward and innovative in crafting a place for policies such as 'flexicurity', 'activation', 'mainstreaming', 'streamlining' or 'fiscal consolidation'. This common grammar operates at multiple levels covering policy tools, agendas, objectives, targets, as well as broader discursive structures.

By the time of the EU's Eastern enlargement in 2004 and 2007, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) had become an influential new mode of governance, seen as 'innovative' (Buchs 2008a), 'deliberative' (de la Porte 2007) and 'experimental' (Zeitlin 2005). The OMC has also been seen as 'soft governance', with novel methods compared to more classical, regulatory or redistributive modes of EU governance (Buchs 2008b; Barbier and Colomb 2012). This new governance method was based on 'regular exchange of information, deliberation, policy evaluation and "naming and shaming" between the Member States' (Buchs 2008a, 765) as a means of spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals. The theorisation of soft forms of governance has varied, but concentrated around 'policy learning, policy transfer, deliberation, participation, peer pressure, shaming, diffusion and mimicking' (Buchs 2008b, 23), with the expectation that through 'the sharing of experience and good practices, all the countries can learn from one another and are therefore all in a position to improve their policies' (Frazer and Marlier 2010, 226). By 2004, when Hungary became a Member of the European Union, the OMC had become an extensive framework, assembling a very particular policy space of objects, texts, ideas, groups, events, datasets, promoting 'modernisation', 'institution building', 'capacity building' as well as 'mobilising relevant actors'. The common grammar rested on the assumption that supranational integration fostered through deliberation and dialogue will result in both learning and mimicking as well as policy convergence. The OMC and the 'Europeanisation of social inclusion' has been portrayed as a dense policy space crowded by numerous policy tools, discursive frames, various governance arrangements and institutionalised forms of cooperation. Radaelli (2003) argued that the OMC is a 'master discourse', which provides policy makers with a common vocabulary and with a tool to legitimise a set of policy objectives setting out new tasks across different policy domains. Within this new mode of governance, 'ideational convergence' (2003, 9), 'norm diffusion' and 'cognitive Europeanisation' all point to the expectation 'that policy makers converge in their assessment of causal mechanisms at work in policy areas, definitions of desirable and unacceptable policies and beliefs about how policies work' (Radaelli 2003, 10). 'Cognitive Europeanisation' has been a particularly popular concept among social policy scholars both in the 'West' (Guillen and Alvarez 2004) and the 'East' (Lendvai 2009; Kusa and Gerbery 2007) pointing to the common cognitive and ideational framing of social policy. Yet, as Spivak reminds us, no matter how much of the institutionalised

commonness we take for granted, translation implies an inevitable space and distance as well as a particular emptiness and spaciness between the 'original', 'majority' and 'powerful' and the 'shadow', or the 'newcomer'. A translation perspective draws attention to the work that goes into the production and reproduction of the 'common'. The grammar of the common will only produce a particular kind of indicators, targets and knowledge. The 'master discourses' will selectively trim, shape, bend and force how policies are designed, acknowledged, evaluated and 'leagued'. Crucially, master discourses both change and remain stable over time. For example, while the 2004 and 2008 period was dominated by soft governance as a master discourse, post-2008 changed that discourse and shifted it much more towards austerity (or in Europeak) 'fiscal consolidation'. The EU policy framework and, I have to say, mainstream academic work on the topic both assume that learning is desirable, beneficiary and will lead to compliance and convergence. Below, I will offer vignettes on the translation of EU social policy frameworks into the Hungarian domestic structures both at the broader, political level but also at policy making level in an effort to deconstruct the naive assumptions of policy learning, policy convergence and compliance.

Translating social inclusion: initial contact zones in post-accession Hungary

The 'Europeanisation of social inclusion' is not a translation between two historical, 'earthy' languages, as Spivak claims. Rather, it is a translation of and in between at least three languages: Hungarian, Eastern European English (Salakhyan 2012), or, perhaps more precisely, Hungarian English and EU English (Clarke 2006), with all their distinctiveness. My ethnographic fieldwork in Hungary between 2003 and 2006 was influenced by the anthropology of policy and disillusioned by the mainstream policy literature; I was taken by ethnographic work 'as a way out of overdetermined paradigms, as theoretically sophisticated antidotes to the excesses of theory' (Riles 2006, 1). The puzzles around the most basic aspects of languages and translation were present throughout my initial fieldwork. The struggle for the 'common language', the self-evidence of one's own policy framework, the need for precision, access to the underlying contents when one translates, puts the bridging efforts at hard work. The 'reading' of key strategic documents produced by both the EU and the Hungarian government on social inclusion priorities has been tainted with difficulties throughout. The important spaces beneath the surfaces of the 'common', the 'shared', the 'same' language kept popping up. It was evident that the distance between the 'author', or the 'original', and the reader always requires complex, and messy conceptual, cultural and political work. To 'blackbox' this process and label it as 'imitation' or policy 'learning' misses crucial questions around who learns where and what. What sort of work goes into translation and what implications does it have for forms and practices of social inclusion policies across spaces and places? How are tensions around authorship handled, silenced or managed?

As a native Hungarian researcher, the position that is afforded to me by being located across two languages is a unique opportunity that warrants some responsibility. All too often, research on the Europeanisation of social inclusion is rather mono or unilingual. Consequently, linguistic diversity, matters of translation and their implications for policy making are erased from theoretical and empirical discussions. These erasures are ever more relevant as concepts such as social inclusion, social exclusion, gender mainstreaming, streamlining or flexibility do not lend themselves to easy translation into Hungarian. None of these words has a straightforward translation. When, in 2003, the European Commission asked Hungary to prepare and sign a Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM), the task was not just to prepare a policy package, a 'strategic vision' of the fight against social exclusion; much more fundamental work had to be done first, which was to create and negotiate indigenous words for terms such as exclusion and inclusion, and pacify the unbearable foreignness of EU English. Both exclusion and inclusion have thrown some important problems at policy makers. The translation of 'social inclusion' into Hungarian has been difficult and troubling for the policy community. The literary translation of social inclusion is '*tarsadalmi befogadás*'. *Befogadás* is not a term that was used previously, it has an everyday use of 'to welcome' or 'to accept somebody in'; however, it has never been a policy term, and as such Hungary never had an 'inclusion policy' as such. It is its alien scaffolding which makes this term so interesting. Although during the JIM process the Commission asserted considerable pressure to use the literary translation and refused to accept other translations, the first National Action Plan for social inclusion (NAP/inclusion) (2004–2006), already submitted by Hungary as a Member State, offered a more independent space for acknowledged alternative translations. As a result, something remarkable happened: the Hungarian version of the first NAP/inclusion became the National Action Plan for Societal Togetherness (*tarsadalmi összetartozás*). As a result of a process of 'deliberation' and 'participation', 'social inclusion' traversed into 'societal togetherness' with two deliberate and considered shifts: the social became societal, and inclusion became togetherness. This translation was suggested by the biggest and most influential association of Alliances of Social Professionals (3SZ), who argued that 'social togetherness' has a strong association with solidarity, social integration and represents a horizontal rather than a vertical notion of inclusion. Societal was suggested to overcome the pejorative connotation of the 'social', which was shed during communist times, and togetherness was suggested as a synonym with solidarity, which at the time was very carefully avoided as a term in the EU. Ironically, there is no such thing as 'togetherness policy', yet the term has a strong association with symbolic politics, the need for new forms of social solidarity, and the need for a political vision on an integrative societal policy. An important moment in this process is that *tarsadalmi összetartozás* (societal togetherness) has been translated back as 'social inclusion' in the English version of the NAP (the Commission insisting on the term social inclusion). As such, social togetherness gets erased, disappears from the eye of the English version of the policy documents and becomes invisible. Erasures take place in multiple sites:

the EU erases a Hungarian contribution, or 'talking back' to the EU's OMC/inclusion about how Member States might understand 'social inclusion', it erases linguistic and conceptual diversity and, above all, it erases dialogue about what social inclusion might be in different spaces ('we don't do togetherness in the EU' quoted an EU official in one of my interviews at the time). This important shift becomes invisible to researchers, who conduct a discourse analysis of key policy documents based on the English version. By looking at only the English version we would miss the detour of 'social togetherness' with all its cultural and political work, even perhaps resistance and talking back to a hegemonic structure. Interestingly, societal togetherness as a Hungarian translation has survived several rounds of OMC and its reform; the 'National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008–2010' still uses the term 'societal togetherness'. However, by 2013 it traverses into 'social catch-up' a favoured terminology of the radical right-wing government since 2010. Crucially, while the theoretical focus on 'cognitive Europeanisation' has drawn scholars to look at discursive practices with a special focus on policy texts, my ethnographic research remained puzzled by the question of what happens when 'social inclusion governance' is 'summoned'? What happens to 'governance', and to 'policy' without vocabulary, without taken-for-granted terminologies, without matching 'policy'? What happens, when '*we have no consensual words to describe what we are doing for the EU*'? In aiming to answer these questions, I am drawing on interviews as well as 'documents' (strategic reports, action plans, and so on.). However, rather than approaching key policy documents via discourse analysis and interrogating their presumed discursive power, I have taken a more ethnographic approach with an emphasis on documents rather than text, where documents are conceptualised as paradigmatic artifacts of modern knowledge practices (Riles 2006). Importantly, documents then can and do just as much 'anti-meaning', as they do meaning-making, and can and do produce and assert unanalysable non-sense (Strathern 2006). In this sense of anti-meaning, the JIM and the NAP/inclusion, both as policy texts as well as strategic policy frameworks, are 'fictions'. They do not exist; they are intangible and weightless. So I wonder whether great care needs to be taken when convergence is identified and reaffirmed based on documents that have little inclination to demonstrate learning, to comply and even less to converge. My argument here is that while scholarship on ideational and discursive Europeanisation assumes that ideas and discourses will inevitably lead to the 'common', and consolidate 'shared ideas' into particular institutional forms; beneath the surface, both the policy process and the associated institutionalisation will remain uncertain, fragmented, contradictory and multiple.

These uncertainties, fragmentation and multiplicity are highlighted by Sziklai and his colleagues who tell a story of the deinstitutionalisation of residential care for people living with disability and care homes for people with mental health or psychiatric problems in Hungary. The deinstitutionalisation of large residential homes, community-based social care and care promoting inclusion and access to mainstream society for such a vulnerable social group has been on the policy agenda ever since the late 1990s. As Sziklai argues, in the NAP/

inclusion 2004–2006, the priorities of improving day care facilities and providing community-based services were emphasised, alongside a legislative commitment to dismantle large residential homes. Yet, while community-based social care has been a priority in the NAP/inclusion, between 2004–2006 the government continued to spend around 8 billion Hungarian forint on improving existing large capacity residential care homes for people living with disability, and people with mental or psychiatric problems, or in fact, building new ones. Paying lip service to the EU's social inclusion agenda, declaring strategic objectives in the NAP/inclusion, while in practice financially supporting the exact opposite is one example of how policy is performed and enacted. However, as Vedres and colleagues assert, there is one important element here, which sheds light on the appropriation of discourses. What happened, he argues, is that the EU's discourses on 'modernisation' of social policy, 'social inclusion of vulnerable groups', the 'fight against social exclusion', discourses on 'respect' and 'human dignity' got appropriated by the institutional establishment, which then used them to legitimise its own existence, authority and institutional practices 'within the fences' (Vedres, Scharle and Varadi 2009, 62). The result is not the dismantling of large-scale residential, institutionalised, totalitarian care, but the opposite, the emergence of a discursively modernised, reinstitutionalised care in the same physical confines, in its new totality. 'Discursive Europeanisation', then, does not necessarily imply institutional 'change', or 'policy convergence' as all too often it is assumed. In my 2013 interviews deinstitutionalisation appeared again:

Let's say that the story starts by a large residential home needing to find money for their leaking roof. Of course, they have no money to repair, but what they know is that they could apply for the EU's Structural Funds under the heading of social inclusion as promoting deinstitutionalisation/community based care, and carry out a loft conversion, where they build independent living quarters for some of their residents. The roof is fixed, Structural Funds money spent, yet community based care is nowhere to be found.

(Social policy advisor)

What is interesting here is that translation is not just a discursive, linguistic strategy, or a strategy for report writing; translation becomes tangible and materialised. Translation, specifically in the spirit of the sociology of translation, allows us to see the intersectionality of texts, practices, exchanges, meanings and anti-meanings, that is the fundamental copying mechanism and strategies that are employed against 'learning'.

Translation and dissent: emerging populism and nationalism and the backlash against the EU social dimension

The 2010 General Election in Hungary and the subsequent victory by Viktor Orbán in the 2014 elections brought about a radical right-wing government. The radicalisation of politics after 2010 very soon became evident. Two important

factors facilitated this radicalisation at least at a discursive level: first the 2008 global economic crisis and more recently the refugee crisis. By 2010, the relationship between the EU and Hungary as a Member State had been tamed. The harsh austerity imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-EU rescue loan and the new era of coercive fiscal governance put Hungary in a position of permanent excessive deficit procedures (Lendvai and Stubbs 2015; Györffy 2015; Bohle 2014). The ‘populist-in-government’ (Bathory 2016) pulled out of the IMF-EU loan in 2010 and adopted strong anti-EU rhetoric, with a strong emphasis on national sovereignty and ‘taking control back’.

The contact zone of transiting post-2010 was one between the EU as a supranational consolidation state (Streeck 2014) and the illiberal state of Hungary. For Streeck (2014) the EU’s consolidation state is a radical neoliberal project that is

a historically novel construct, designed to ensure the market conformity of formerly sovereign nation-states: a market straitjacket for democratic politics, with powers formally resembling various other innovations in international law, except that in this case what they involve are not a duty to ‘protect’ but a duty to pay. The purpose of the whole edifice, whose completion is drawing ever closer, is to depoliticize the economy while at the same time de-democratizing politics.

(Streeck 2014, 116)

The illiberal state of Hungary, on the other hand, in the words of Orbán is in essence one where

we have abandoned liberal methods and principles of organising society, as well as the liberal way to look at the world We are . . . parting ways with Western European dogmas, making ourselves independent from them This is about an ongoing reorganization of the Hungarian state. Contrary to the liberal state’s organizational logic of the past twenty years, this is a state originating from national interests.

(Orbán 2014)

The austerity turn of the EU and the illiberal turn in Hungary allowed for unique translation practices to emerge, in which dissent, talking back and political contestation took centre stage. While the EU social dimension saw the emergence of the ‘European Social Pillars’, little new content could be seen in the strategic directions. Rather, old principles were recited in terms of building ‘on the common values and principles shared at national, European and international levels’ (page 6),¹ facilitating convergence by screening social performance of Member States and relying on notions such as flexicurity to achieve improved employment and social standards. At the same time, the illiberal state in Hungary embarked on a radical set of welfare reforms and a radical reinterpretation of ‘European values’, with Orbán declaring, soon after 2010, the ‘end of the welfare state’. Erasing the word ‘austerity’ from public grammar, a new moral discourse of

work and merit was introduced within the framework of a 'new national contract'. The comprehensive reconfiguration of the Hungarian welfare state within the new contract started soon after 2010. 2011 saw the introduction of a flat tax system at a very low rate and the World Bank-inspired pension system was renationalised. In 2010 a four-year freeze on all benefits and public sector wages was introduced. Unemployment benefit was cut and illiberal workfare was rolled out to a massive scale. Orbán was the first European prime minister to suggest that unemployment benefit could and would be phased out altogether. In the meantime, the duration of unemployment benefit was cut dramatically to the shortest in Europe, as well as the monthly amount of long-term unemployment benefit being cut from around 95 to 70 euros. New, much more flexible labour laws were introduced to make it easier for employers to fire and hire. Public expenditure on education has been cut, higher education spending has seen a 30 per cent cut between 2010 and 2014. Between 2008 and 2016, social spending on benefits has been scaled back dramatically (Szikra 2014). Unemployment related benefits have fallen from 0.4 per cent of GDP in 2008 to 0.1 per cent in 2016; sick payment and disability benefits were reduced from 1.8 per cent of GDP to 1.3 per cent, child benefits have fallen from 2.0 per cent to 1.5 per cent of GDP. Total social protection spending as a share of GDP has fallen from 15.9 per cent in 2008 to 14.3 per cent in 2016 (Policy Agenda 2015). A social disinvestment state emerged in which the welfare state with all its branches came under massive discursive and fiscal attack as being part of the 'establishment' which was deemed outmoded.

The 'new social contract' also came with a new language – one which aimed to reconfigure and rebuild forms and practices of social solidarity, social bonds and relations in the widest possible terms. Certain terms were eradicated from government documents. Juhasz (2012) argues that the regime has brought about a massive backlash in gender issues, with gender mainstreaming being replaced by family mainstreaming underpinned by a Christian ideology focusing on demographic growth. 'Family mainstreaming' is argued to have replaced the unnecessary reference to gender and places much more emphasis on families and population growth. Mothers are actively 'deactivated' into extensive maternity leave, and families with three or more children are offered 'state motherhood' with paid leave. It is argued that family mainstreaming is replacing the liberal vision of gender relations with a Christian tradition. Gender mainstreaming has effectively been banned as a terminology. 'Social assistance' has been renamed as 'parish assistance', with deliberate paternalistic and feudal connotations dating back to the thirteenth century. Abolished by the Communist Party in 1983, this administrative unit has been reinstated, with parish assistance being made discretionary and subject to the financial resources available to the parish. Child benefit has become 'pedagogical and educational support' with an explicit reference to the duty of parenting as well as its conditionality upon compulsory education – educational support is suspended after 50 hours of unauthorised absence from school. Social inclusion and social togetherness have been renamed social catch-up with explicit reference to the need for people to work towards catch-up

up to the level of the 'hard working Hungarians'. Many of the former social benefits were renamed in such a way that the 'social' has been eradicated and replaced either with employment or parish related terminologies.

In many ways, the linguistic and moral reconfiguration of the 'welfare state' in Hungary is an explicit dissent from the liberal supranational consensus. The 'end of the welfare state' discourse is explicitly framed as a twentieth-century anti-Western European discourse, which is 'outdated' and 'individualistic'. While the contestation in the initial post-accession period was confined to the 'world of policy', dissent in the post-2010 period was much more political, ideologically driven and more explicit. The Hungarian dissent is a direct challenge to the common grammar and its associated 'consensus on consensus'. It can be seen as a result and consequence of the deeply depoliticised Accession process (Sissenich 2007), where the role of Accession countries is to take on the *acquis* and comply with EU frameworks. The Hungarian dissent is a 'talking back'. For translation studies dissent is always present in different shapes and forms. Of course, in the context of Brexit, dissent is more explicit, one which requires disintegration to be theorised.

Conclusion

This chapter was not looking to conceptualise social inclusion policies as a form of discourse understood as a speech act, a communicative act, a form of domination or hegemony (Howarth 2010), or as a coordinative discourse (Smith 2011). Nor was it aiming to provide a textual analysis of policies, within the tradition of critical discourse analysis. Rather, it was an attempt to move away from the taken-for-granted terrain of norms, commons, techno-zones of the EU's soft and coercive governance and trace more fine-grained processes of appropriation, (non-)embedding, talking back and resistances to the supposed 'master discourse' and 'consensus on consensus'.

Translation is an immensely important process here, where translating across languages not only transmits, transfers and transplants, but also makes, crafts and alters policies. Importantly it points to Muller's (2007, 207) assertion that '[i]n ignoring the politics of translation, we de-politicize the antagonisms and struggles for meaning that take place in a foreign language' (Muller 2007, 207). Importantly, this analysis is not a unique or exotic example about the particularities of Hungarian language, culture and politics. The cross-cultural productivity of travelling policies always implies a need for many more stories to be written to open up the 'black box', to make visible the forms and practices of translation, and the plurality, diversity and multiplicity of social inclusion in the EU despite all the encompassing claims about the common. Translation offers an open-ended endeavour, where we don't yet know what is coming. Translation is more about how we shift direction, capture shifts in translation, how to pause and think differently and attend to what slips out so that it 'does not fit or get lost in translation' (Best 2012, 86). Translation might also help us to untangle the equation in which to 'Europeanise' is to 'modernise'. It might be necessary to

unlearn the common and the taken-for-granted ideas and make them the subject of academic inquiries. As Kapoor puts it,

unlearning means stopping oneself from always wanting to correct, teach, theorise, develop, colonise, appropriate, use, record, inscribe, enlighten: the impetus to always be the speaker and speak in all situations must be seen for what it is: a desire for mastery and domination.

(Kapoor 2004, 642)

The awkward buzziness of key policy terms such as mainstreaming, streamlining, flexicurity and their vagueness will end up in an inevitable contact zone, in which they get translated. Consensus-building is then based on this performative encounter with many fictitious elements. Discursive Europeanisation may not lead to ideational convergence, but rather a series of policy fictions and performative policies, which undermine the 'common' just as much as they create convergence towards it. It may well be that both in terms of policy frameworks and academic scholarship on the EU, too much emphasis is placed on an assumed consensus. The 'consensus on consensus' is reinforced and reproduced by both policy discourses within the EU circuits, as well as by academic discourses, which take for granted what we mean by the buzzwords and aim for the 'common'. Here, Diez's longstanding, yet ever so contemporary, warning remains important:

the various attempts to capture the Union's nature are not mere description of an unknown polity, but take part in the construction of the polity itself. To that extent, they are not politically innocent, and may themselves become subject of analysis along with articulations from other actors.

(Diez 1999, 599)

Note

- 1 European Commission (2016), 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Launching a Consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights', available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2016%3A127%3AFIN> (accessed 19 May 2017).

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10 Faithful translation?

Shifting the boundaries of the religious and the secular in the global climate change debate¹

Katharina Glaab

Introduction

In climate change politics, natural science, technology and economics usually play a particularly important role to guide public debates and political action. Yet, politics always has a normative component and there is a wide scholarly debate on how to embed normative questions within the technocratic and economist elements of global governance (Brassett and Higgott 2003). In the climate change literature, scholars have pointed out that besides technological and scientific solutions, questions of ethics, justice and fairness matter and need to be part of the political debate (Harris 2010; Hulme 2009; Gardiner and Caney 2010). Many civil society actors have advocated a turn towards questions of justice in the global climate change debate. More recently, faith-based actors have been particularly outspoken about normative questions in global climate change politics – and not only since Pope Francis I (2015) published the first papal encyclical on the environment arguing that climate change is a moral issue and calling for an integral ecology. In fact, many faith-based actors and organizations are present at the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) to take part in the public debate and political negotiations. However, taking into account that secularization theory usually conceptualizes international negotiation sites as secular spaces, in which a cosmopolitan secular elite dominates and religion is seen to be absent (Berger 1999, 11), the growing presence of the religious in this context points to an increasing entanglement of religious, scientific and political issues.

The supposed separation between the religious and the political is particularly relevant in international institutions in general and in climate change negotiations in particular. Here the supposed separation creates seemingly clear boundaries between the two, according to which one can distinguish between rationalism, reason and science on the one side and irrationality and emotion on the other. In this setting, faith-based actors (among other civil society actors) often stress the normative and ethical dimension of climate change as an important issue in order to find a legally binding agreement to avert climate change. However, within this ‘secularized’ setting many negotiators and environmental activists find faith-based actors and the language of religion unhelpful to

find solutions within the negotiations. Hence, from a Habermasian perspective there is a need to translate between the religious and the secular: he proposes that faith-based actors should translate moral knowledge and religious concepts into a more appealing 'secular' language to create overlaps with other normative concepts of civil society (Habermas 2006).

In this chapter, the study of practices of faith-based actors can enable the theorization of the processes of religious/secular translation. Faith-based actors discursively navigate between the secular and the religious, at times using more faith-based language and at times using language that is more secular. This chapter argues that these translation processes relate the seemingly separate entities of the religious and the secular – sometimes shifting the boundaries between them and sometimes reifying them. In the following, the chapter will develop this argument in three moves. First, it will delineate how boundaries between the secular and the religious are drawn and discuss the repercussions of this assumed dualism at the level of international institutions. Second, I will introduce Habermas' concept of translation and discuss it with respect to the different knowledge systems that religious and secular actors might provide. Third, the chapter will investigate how faith-based actors translate their knowledge within the 'secularized' space of the global climate change debate and negotiations and delineate the ambiguous ways in which translation processes are executed. It will specifically look at two cases of secular/religious translation: the papal encyclical on the environment as a boundary object of translation practices and the practices of faith-based organizations at the UNFCCC. Lastly, I will discuss how these translation practices take part in shifting the boundaries of the secular and the religious, and how translation processes can be understood in a post-secular environment.

Drawing boundaries between the religious, the secular and science

Religion and politics are often recognized as two distinct and fundamentally separate spaces. Secularization theory has promoted the assumption that religion has lost its importance in modern society (Berger 1969; Norris and Inglehart 2004), a postulation that appears to be particularly true for Western societies. It posits that religion is retreating into the private sphere and that public-political spaces are more or less secular. It is based on the assumption that the secular provides the most neutral and rational way of engaging within public political debates. In contrast, it is claimed that religion does not have a political role and has only limited influence in political debates. The differentiation between secularism and religion is not only problematic as it posits a private and un-political role for religion; it also entails the creation of further binary oppositions between 'modern/primitive', 'reason/emotion' and 'Western/non-Western' (Wilson 2012b). The construction of these dualisms draws seemingly distinct boundaries between religious and secular spaces. These entities have a clearly identifiable essence which diverges between reason and rationalism on the one side and irrationalism

and emotions on the other. This demarcation of spaces shows that the secularization debate is not just about differentiating between the religious and the secular as distinct spaces. In addition, it also produces an apparent contradiction between religion and science, since this concept of science and its associated reason and rationalism are assumed to be inherently part of the secular. The separation of religion from economy and science thus brought forth a secular worldview that is supposedly independent of religious views and arguments (Litfin 2003, 30f).

However, 'science' and 'religion' were not always conceptualized as independent from one another. Indeed, their entanglement only ended with the invention of modern science in the nineteenth century, which conversely turned the relationship between science and religion into a conflict (Harrison 2006, 86). By way of excluding religion it was possible for Max Weber to speak later 'of the scientific vocation as one that was narrowly specialist and one in which no place could be found for the broader questions of value and meaning' (Harrison 2006, 88). As a consequence of the creation of these boundaries, religion similarly excluded what was understood to be scientific. However, as Wilson argues '[a]rguably, both science and religion have at their foundation the same goal—to more fully understand the universe and how it operates. They simply take different approaches to the same question' (Wilson 2012a, 6).

Secularization theory has been widely criticized on a theoretical level for taking as given that there are inherent differences between secular and religious ideas (Kubáľková 2000; Barbato and Kratochwil 2009). For instance, scholars critical of this dualism point to the deep entanglement of the development of modern statehood with religious and secular notions (Asad 2003). Post-secular scholars in International Relations argue that religion has never been absent and was always political. They point out that religion has become empirically more and more visible in light of the rise of religious movements, terror and media presence in the public and show that religion's importance has declined neither in society nor for most individuals.² This has given rise to the idea that public and political institutions need to acknowledge pluralism in modern society and allow different actors to take part in decision-making processes.

We can see this development also within the realm of global governance, since international institutions are more open to the inclusion of religious actors than secularization theory would suggest. At the United Nations (UN) level, Bettiza and Dionigi notice that

[t]he UN is a secular institution, but not an aggressive secularist one. It is secular because its goals, activities and organizational structure are not religious and they do not subscribe to any religious ethic. It is not aggressive secularist, however, because its underlying mission and norms are not anti-religious. In fact, the UN has generally been neutral and open towards the public participation of religious groups and communities in its debates and activities.

(Bettiza and Dionigi 2015, 629)

Similarly, Bush observed that international institutions like the World Bank or the European Commission have increasingly incorporated religious groups into their decision-making processes (Bush 2007, 1646). But despite this increasing participation and engagement of religious actors, faith-based actors still seem to be treated as distinctive and different from other civil society actors. Daulatzai (2004), for instance, asserts that a 'particular secularistic vocabulary, grammar and culture of politics' (565) dominates at the World Social Forum, an international organizational space that is often seen as particularly diverse, tolerant and open (Smith and Smythe 2017). While scholars ascribe an important role to civil society when it comes to normative concerns and moral questions, the supposed separation of religious and political spaces results in the marginalization of faith-based practices in 'secularized politics'. The challenge to the secularization thesis has still been largely ignored in research on international institutions and transnational civil society. Within research on the transnational global elite that comprises civil society in international fora, faith-based actors seem to be largely absent. Indeed, secularist assumptions seem to be as powerful as ever within this branch of research. The dominance of secularism has therefore even been described as creating an 'ontological injustice' as it excludes and marginalizes alternative non-secular visions of the world that are subordinated to a secular ontology (Wilson 2017).

In fact, the separation between the religious and the secular is empirically still visible in international institutions. And it has consequences that seem to be particularly relevant in global climate change politics. First, because the globalized and transnational character of climate change is debated in supranational fora that are dominated by a cosmopolitan secular elite (Berger 1999; see also Bush 2007) and, second, because science tends to play an especially important role in environmental debates and international cooperation (Epstein 2005). For instance, Frank, Hironika and Schofer (2000) have shown that particularly natural scientists, who build their legitimacy on the supposedly universal, rationalist perception of truth, have set the agenda in the formation of environmental regimes. The above described distinction that has been created between religion and science may have led natural scientists as well as environmentalists to consider religion as irrational (Wilson 2012, 21) and to assume that the language of religion is unhelpful for solving environmental problems (Dunlap 2006). In addition, based on the assumption that certain science-based, secularist actors dominate international negotiation sites, civil society actors adapt to this distinct setting. Bush argues that this adaptation to the institutional setting is driven by an underlying rationalism that effectively narrows down the possibilities of discussion (Bush 2007, 1653). In the case of human rights organizations at the UN, she shows that these organizations structure their work according to this bureaucratic environment. Advocates are increasingly professionals and their work practices adapt to the UN language requirements, technology use and management reporting procedures (Bush 2007, 1653). Through this action, they have contributed to making human rights a field defined by a secular discourse (Bush 2007, 1653). Therefore, scholars have argued that the participation at

international climate change conferences and international policy-making more generally, 'involves a technologisation of discourse and a standardisation of social practices' (Holzscheiter 2005, 742). These broader standardization developments may be relevant for faith-based actors, as international institutions prioritize certain well-known secular practices and marginalize lesser-known religious language and practices. This is a development that may lead to a reification rather than a dissolution of the religious/secular divide within international institutions.

The post-secular and the need for translation of religious norms

Within the context of international institutions, religion is perceived as breaching international negotiation practices, as it does not seem to resonate with the principles of the Enlightenment nor to speak the language of science, economics and law (Bush 2007, 1645). Hence, language practices also separate the secular and the religious and deepen the divide. Therefore, translation between the two entities seems to be particularly relevant, especially within the context of the climate change debate. So far, scholars of global environmental politics have mostly been interested in how scientific knowledge can be translated into political action and change (e.g. Litfin 1995; Hajer 1995). In this context, Litfin speaks of 'knowledge brokers' who are 'the intermediaries between original researchers, or the producers of knowledge, and the policymakers who consume that knowledge' (Litfin 1995, 4–5). When Litfin speaks of knowledge in this context, she mainly speaks of scientific knowledge. In other words, 'knowledge brokers' are translators between the scientific and the political world. This understanding is also present in international climate change negotiations, where civil society representatives often provide expert knowledge, accompany technical and scientific expert meetings and take on the role of translators between scientific and political knowledge. But for what kind of knowledge do faith-based actors act as brokers and between which people do they act as mediators? Based on their religious belief systems, could one assume that they communicate alternative or non-scientific knowledge?

At this point, it might be fruitful to consider the difference between scientific and other forms of knowledge. Scholars of Science Technology Studies have pointed to the difference between *episteme* and *techné*. While the former stands for 'knowledge' or 'science' and comprises agreed rules and standards, the concept of *techné* assumes that there is practical knowledge based on experience. While scientific knowledge is based on a notion of observation and in its secularist tradition excludes value statements, Annas argues that practical knowledge can actually be understood as a model for knowledge in general, which not only includes practical expertise but also moral knowledge (Annas 2006). Accordingly, moral knowledge is a form of practical understanding of the world in which values play a part in every form of knowledge production. Moral knowledge represents a more general category and differs from singular moral belief as 'moral belief is an isolated grasp of a particular fact or set of facts, while moral knowledge is understanding of what underlies and unifies our bringing different

types of fact together' (Annas 2006, 285). Having considered the difference between scientific, practical and particularly moral knowledge, faith-based knowledge is different from scientific knowledge as it embodies, in the Weberian sense, ethics-oriented value rationality, while scientific knowledge represents goal-oriented formal rationality (Ahu Sandal 2011, 933). In contrast to scientific 'knowledge brokers', faith-based actors can best be described as 'moral knowledge brokers' as their action is guided by belief, or what Habermas calls 'moral intuition' based on passed scriptures and experience.

Although normative issues such as justice and equity are increasingly discussed within the climate change debate, there is still an imbalance between these normative concerns on the one side and scientific and technological issues on the other (Klinsky et al. 2017). Within the secular international context in which the climate change negotiations take place, scientific knowledge usually has more authority than other forms of knowledge – including faith-based knowledge. But Ahu Sandal points out that this prioritization may actually not be representative, because '[f]or a significant number of people, religious knowledge has more relevance than scientific knowledge – actually, religious knowledge, at times, has the power to define the borders of science as we have seen with the debates surrounding stem cell research' (Ahu Sandal 2011, 934). In most international institutions, however, actors drawing on scientific or other forms of knowledge are still working in what Boltanski would call a 'situation of non-equivalence' (Boltanski 2011). This is despite increasing awareness that religious brokers might be essential to the political success of environmental policies, since they continue to play an important role in many societies. The way in which this imbalance is addressed matters then also in terms of the power-knowledge nexus, as this secularized framework sets the context of most critical political decisions.

In light of this 'ontological injustice' (Wilson 2017) between secular and faith-based actors, discourses and their perceived legitimacy, the issue of translation between the different spaces and across these boundaries seems to be even more pertinent. Habermas has explicitly engaged with the issue of the translation of religious arguments within the public sphere and argues that there is an 'institutional translation proviso' that religious citizens should adhere to (Habermas 2006, 10). He is concerned with the 'zero-sum game' of secularization between science and technology, on the one hand, and church and religion on the other (Habermas 2001). In order to overcome this dualism, Habermas argues that religious citizens are required to translate in order to take part in public debate and translate 'from the vocabulary of a particular religious community into a generally accessible language' (Habermas 2006, 10). He points out that religions 'have a special power to articulate moral intuitions, especially with regard to vulnerable forms of communal life' (Habermas 2006, 10). According to Habermas, the process of translation from religious to secular language is supposed to make this moral knowledge and intuition of faiths accessible to 'non-believers through the universal language of reason and at the same time keeps the boundaries of knowledge and faith firmly in place' (Mavelli and Petit 2012, 936). But Habermas similarly acknowledges that identity does not have to be split into a

public and a private self when taking part in political discussions and religious citizens should 'therefore be allowed to express and justify their convictions in a religious language if they cannot find secular "translations" for them' (Habermas 2006, 10).

Based on Habermas' notion of translation, Bettiza and Dionigi argue that religious norms 'have the greatest opportunity to diffuse their norms within the institutions of the liberal international order when their norms become intelligible from a secular, liberal, normative perspective through a successful process of institutional translation' (Bettiza and Dionigi 2015, 622). While this perspective conceives of translation particularly as a linguistic translation, Dallmayr argues that taking a post-secular perspective on translation processes seriously requires a conceptualization of translation between the religious and the secular in rather practical terms, that is, 'the transfer of teachings into human and social life' (Dallmayr 2012). A translational process is therefore one in which 'heart' and 'mind' can be bridged (Dallmayr 2012). I will argue that translation is both a linguistic and a practical process, in which the different entities are set in relation to another. The boundaries between the secular and the religious are not just static and reified but they are constantly shifted, moved and negotiated in and through the discursive practices of the actors that inhabit these spaces. Translation is then not just about what people say, but who speaks and from what position. In other words, agency matters as does who is perceived to be a legitimate actor, mediator or translator in a given context.

Faith-based translation practices in the global climate change debate

The separation of religious and secular spaces has been particularly relevant for a long time within the international climate change negotiations. This separation is constituted in the emergence of climate change as a political entity, which relates to the differentiation of those tasks that were covered by its institutional political body, the UNFCCC, and those that were not (for this form of boundary creation see Abbott 1995). In the initial debate on the mitigation of climate change the Secretariat put a strong emphasis on technological and economic issues. Specific normative issues have only become more prominent in connection with the increase in discussions on adaptation to climate change, which highlight questions of equity and the 'common but differentiated responsibilities' of different Member States. More recently, scholars and activists have challenged the separation of scientific, technological and normative issues. Their claim for climate justice is the reference point for a broad and diverse environmental movement. Among these groups, faith-based actors have taken a prominent role. For instance, Pope Francis I (2015) published a widely recognized encyclical on the environment in which he framed climate change as a moral issue and called for integrating justice in debates on the environment. The Dalai Lama added his voice and supported a strong agreement in Paris (Freedman 2015) and Muslim leaders published an Islamic declaration on climate change (International Islamic

Climate Change Symposium 2015). Even then-UNFCCC executive secretary Christina Figueres called on religious institutions ‘to find their voice and set their moral compass’ (Figueres 2014).

Of course, faith-based actors are not the only producers of normative and moral discourses and this is not about proposing that religion is monopolizing a view on justice. Indeed, many other actors who base their expertise on non-religious knowledge have made a case for justice as well. Civil society actors such as human rights groups, women and development organizations and indigenous groups have emphasized normative questions and showed how their knowledge challenges dominant scientific understandings within institutions. In contrast to faith-based actors, however, many civil society organizations have been working within the secular framework of the UNFCCC for a long time and are used to employing ‘secular’ language. Faith-based actors, however, have only recently started being more involved and organizing themselves as a group within this institutional context (Glaab 2017). The translation of religious language is therefore also a way of communicating with one another in this context. In the following, I will look at two forms of translation practices between the secular and the religious in the field of global climate change politics: first, translation practices around the papal encyclical that made a huge impact on UNFCCC and beyond, and, second, faith-based actors as boundary-crossers within the UNFCCC setting.

The papal encyclical as a boundary object between religion, politics and science

When the papal encyclical *Laudato Si’* – on Care for Our Common Home – (henceforth LS) was published in June 2015, it received wide attention across religions, the scientific community and politics. For the first time ever, a Pope focused explicitly on the issue of climate change in an encyclical. He put social-ecological questions at its centre and acknowledged that climate change intersects with global inequality and poverty.³ Based on the scientific evidence that human activity is responsible for climate change, the encyclical underlined that climate change is a key ethical challenge to the world. It was released at a critical juncture in global environmental politics: just after the G7 Summit and only months before the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September. And, of course, it was particularly important for the UNFCCC climate change conference in December 2015, which, at that point in time, struggled to find a political solution to climate change and an agreement that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. The papal encyclical was a strong signal towards the community of states, as it underlined the urgency of the climate change situation and called for more cooperation on this issue.

Laudato Si’ is not just directed to a religious Catholic community, but explicitly addresses ‘all people of good will’ (LS §62) and aims at engaging in a dialogue with ‘every person living on this planet’ (LS §3). Hence, the encyclical was not just presented in the Vatican and to a religious community, but Pope Francis talked about the message of the encyclical in important political fora such as the

United States Congress (24 September 2015) and the UN General Assembly (25 September 2015). A representative of the Holy See also presented the content in a short intervention at one of the plenary sessions at the UNFCCC. Therefore, the encyclical was not only discussed among Christians, but triggered a broader debate among environmentalists in civil society, in public media, among politicians and even among scientists. Well-known scientific journals such as *Nature* and *Science* published editorials on the papal encyclical and the climate engagement of the Vatican State, in which they praised the Pope's leadership on climate action and efforts to reconcile science and religion (McNutt 2014; Campbell 2015). The editor-in chief of *Science* even 'applaud[ed] the forthright climate statement of Pope Francis, currently our most visible champion for mitigating climate change' (McNutt 2015).

The reaction of the scientific community is interesting, since, as the editor of *Nature* rightly observed, the 'relations between the Catholic Church and science have long been ambivalent' (Campbell 2015, 391). However, in the case of climate change, scientists now argued that '[t]he problems that motivate the Vatican are no different from those that concern the scientific community' (McNutt 2014, 1429). In the reception of the encyclical, it was noticeable that the commentator underlined that the Pope 'got the science right' (Gillis 2015). Media and scientists particularly praised the Pope for accepting the scientific consensus on climate change. And Pope Francis himself was eager to emphasize that he refers to 'the best scientific findings available today' (LS §15). While the encyclical conforms to traditional Catholic social teaching in terms of structure and principles and also uses a judgemental and pastoral language – something that one would expect from a document from the Catholic Church – the discussion of scientific evidence plays an important role. Indeed, the entire first chapter discusses at length and in a clear and 'scientific' language the impact of man-made climatic changes.

The encyclical shows that the Pope deliberately tried to consider and include different forms of knowledge. Pope Francis involved scientific expertise in the process of writing the encyclical, not only through a close collaboration with the Pontifical Academy for Sciences, but also through consultations with scientific climate advisors such as Hans Joachim Schellnhuber and Ottmar Edenhofer from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. Schellnhuber was also one of the four presenters and the only scientist speaking at the official press conference on the release of the encyclical in the Vatican. In addition, the encyclical builds on existing political knowledge and cites secular documents such as the 1992 Earth Summit, the Montreal Convention or the Conference of the United Nations on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). It is also remarkable that Pope Francis incorporates many references to bishop conferences, mainly from the Global South, particularly in the section in which he discusses the relation of climate change and global inequality. Therewith he acknowledges that local, experience-based knowledge is important to understand the challenges that climate change poses to societies. Therewith, the encyclical manages to include not only scientific and political knowledge, but also practical knowledge

of the communities affected. Hence, *Laudato Si'* does not only ask for dialogue between science and religion, but it establishes a dialogue by involving scientific expertise and knowledge and setting it in relation to other practical forms of knowledge.

In this sense, the papal encyclical depicts an interesting boundary object that relates the secular and scientific on the one side and the moral and religious on the other. The Pope himself takes on the Habermasian task of acting as a translator and mediator between the two entities when he asks for more dialogue. While encouraging a debate, he is still firmly aware of the Church's place and makes it clear that it 'does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics' (LS §188). Even scientific observers argued that the Pope is a powerful translator: 'given the Pope's moral authority and sky-rocketing popularity . . . his words might travel farther than sober scientific reports by bodies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change' (Campbell 2015, 391). Interestingly, this observation suggests that scientific knowledge itself may also be in need of translation. When decision-makers and ordinary people do not comprehend or use scientific facts, this form of secular expertise may actually need to be translated to a non-scientific audience in another language. The papal encyclical tries to translate both ways: religious knowledge and its ethical concerns to a broader secular audience and scientific knowledge to a religious audience. Therewith, the papal encyclical represents an object of translation that creates a collaboration of Christians, other people of faiths, scientists and policy-makers and relates the different entities of the religious and the secular.

Faith-based actors as boundary-crossers at the UNFCCC

Faith-based actors at the UNFCCC comprise actors such as churches, faith-based development organizations and the Holy See. Based on Habermas' institutional translation idea, they act as translators between religious and political spaces and the religious actors are supposed to meet the translation requirement, not the secular actors. While faith-based actors often speak the language of religion within their communities, most of these actors see the need to speak in a different voice to negotiators and collaborators at the UNFCCC. For instance, in a discussion at a side event on 'Care for creation' at the 2015 Bonn inter-sessional, a Holy See representative talked about the 'operationalization' of religious thoughts in the papal encyclical into political action and gave the example of the translation of concepts such as human dignity and solidarity into human rights language.⁴ This explicit and frank acceptance of the secular context by a Church representative is quite remarkable. At first sight, it suggests that faith-based actors acknowledge the need for translation and seem to accept their role as translators in this context.

But there are different ways in which this institutional translation requirement is interpreted and practised. Faith-based actors translate their convictions and knowledge both through the imitation and differentiation (Barry 2013, 415) of secularized international negotiation practices. Broadly speaking, there are, first,

those faith-based actors who adapt their language and practices to the international secular environment and particularly imitate civil society practices, and, second, those actors who distance themselves from these practices and foreground their unique and distinct agency as a religious actor. In the first case, there are those actors who want to be taken seriously for their expert knowledge on science and technical processes. They work closely with other civil society actors such as the Climate Action Network (CAN), one of the largest and most established civil society networks within the UNFCCC context. For instance, faith-based actors such as Christian Aid were involved in the development of the equity framework proposed by the CAN network at the climate change conference in Warsaw in 2013. As another example, *Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité* (CIDSE), an association of Catholic development organizations, suggested that the concepts of the above-mentioned papal encyclical, which are firmly anchored within the Catholic faith, should be operationalized in order to contribute to the political debate (CIDSE 2015). In their report on the papal encyclical, they developed concrete policy advice for an agreement at the 2015 climate change conference.

But the close cooperation with other mainstream non-governmental organization (NGO) networks is also critically debated within the religious communities themselves. For instance, one interviewee was concerned that faith-based actors are drawn too much into NGO language and end up sounding almost identical to the NGO sector, thereby losing their unique voice and the ability to speak to their constituents.⁵ This fear of 'co-optation' is taken to the extreme when in some of my interviews, representatives of faith-based organizations even felt uncomfortable when asked about the faith background of their organization. They did not want to be seen as any different from other civil society actors. While they focus on emphasizing normative issues such as equity and justice in the process, translation as imitation seems to adapt language and work style to that of other civil society organizations to the point that few actually recognize the religious background of the representative anymore.

In the second case, there are those faith-based actors who stress that they do not represent scientific expert knowledge on climate change, but the experience of the people affected by it. They understand themselves as strong witnesses of the ethical implications of climate change and as representing the poorest and most vulnerable – those who cannot speak within this political process – by giving them a voice. This is something which strongly relates to their position as brokers of moral knowledge based on experience. As one faith-based actor put it, 'we are also technical and can enter into discussions about the paragraphs in the Kyoto Protocol, [but] we can talk more to your heart than the logic'.⁶ Seeing the religious component as a unique feature which gives moral authority, faith-based actors stress their personal or their organization's religious background but similarly link it to existing concepts and initiatives. Campaigns such as the 'climate pilgrimage' or 'fast for the climate', which were launched before the Paris climate conference in 2015, specifically refer to religious symbols such as the idea of pilgrims or fasting that are central practices in religions, but also link up to

other civil society campaigns on climate justice. Interestingly, this group of faith-based actors deliberately choose to address others on an emotional level and try to establish emotional consent by linking their political objective to desires, fears and beliefs. They do not challenge the Weberian dualism between science and religion, but they sometimes try to use it to their advantage by furthering their cause through the use of emotive language.

While 'secular' language seems to be more appealing to some and helps to connect religious ideas to existing norms within the framework, emotional faith-based language seems to work for others. An informant argued that language is adjusted depending on the target, so there is for instance no point using any faith language when meeting with Sweden, but in talks with Peru or Poland it is helpful to use a faith language.⁷ Yet, when used within different, namely 'secularized', contexts those actors of faith that use other rhetorical devices such as the language of religion or emotion are often not deemed to be legitimate actors, but are sometimes even labelled as 'crazy' people by other representatives.⁸ Some faith-based actors at least seem to work with a tacit knowledge of when it is appropriate to speak a religious or a secular language.

Faith-based actors at the UNFCCC cross and play the boundaries of the religious and the secular. As witnesses of the impact of climate change in local contexts, they can act as translators between the communities affected by climate change and the international community at the UN. Yet, this role as 'boundary-crossers' is performed in various ways. Some faith-based actors translate beliefs and experience-based knowledge into a more appealing secular language to make their moral viewpoint more understandable in terms of a policy framework. Others deliberately perform their faith and play the dualism between religion and politics to their advantage by emphasizing the emotional element of religion to support their moral claims. And others are even able to play the boundaries. Being aware of the identity of their counterparts, they make a strategic decision as to whether religious or secular language will be more legitimate. In all instances though, they relate actors, norms and principles across these boundaries.

Conclusion: shifting the boundaries of secular and religious spaces

In contrast to the assumptions of many scholars using the concept of translation, such as in Actor-Network Theory, the field of global climate politics does not follow the principle of symmetry. In fact, as secularism is dominant within this policy field, faith-based actors act in a field of 'non-equivalence'. Of course, one could argue that the sheer material existence of faith-based actors in this presumably secular space transcends the boundaries of the religious and the secular. However, while there is an increasing presence of faith-based actors at institutions of global governance, practitioners often still perceive them as being distinct and different from other civil society actors. In order to communicate across the boundaries of the religious and the secular, Habermas argued that faith-based actors have an 'institutional translation proviso' to translate moral

knowledge into a more appealing 'secular' language. The presumed dualism between the religious and the secular is then addressed by translating different normative conceptions based on the respective faith traditions into the secularized setting of global climate politics.

Faith-based actors discursively navigate between the secular and the religious and constantly negotiate and shift their boundaries in international institutions. Some of them provide alternative knowledge to the rationalized discourses of political decision-making, some of them adapt to secularized negotiation practices while others keep their distinct language and practices. Despite these differences, all of them somehow translate between secular and religious spaces and form relations across boundaries. In these translation processes, the Pope relates a community of scientists, people of faith and politicians around the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, and the translation practices of faith-based actors at the UNFCCC connect local experiences of climate change, international climate norms and transnational civil society. While the relationship between religion and science is reconfigured around the encyclical, relationships at the UNFCCC are forged through networks and collaborations, in which faith-based actors consciously or unconsciously adapt their language and practices to the perceived secular or religious environment. However, some faith-based actors also play with the dualism between the religious and the secular and build relationships on the assumption of their difference. Thereby the involved actors reify the boundaries between them by respecting each other's specific expertise (be this scientific or moral knowledge); this is a division of labour between morality and science that sometimes seems to be intentional. This kind of relationship does not restructure the boundaries between the religious and the secular, but affirms and reifies them. In this act of translation, the actors involved form relations across and because of existing boundaries. It shows that faith-based actors forge relationships in various ways. Translation processes in global climate politics therefore do not transcend the differences between the religious and the secular, but they relate the different entities, and shift and negotiate the boundaries between them.

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank the organizers and participants of the workshop 'Translation in World Politics' and the CHSD research cluster for their constructive and helpful feedback. Special thanks to Paul Beaumont for carefully reading and commenting on the last version.
- 2 Although Europe is still an outlier to this trend, see Berger 1999.
- 3 Ecology is not a new topic in the social teachings of the Catholic Church though. Pope Francis' predecessors have addressed the link between ecological challenges and modernity in an encyclical before and he refers to these in *Laudato Si'*.
- 4 Personal observation, side event on 'Caring for Creation: Catholic Perspective on Climate Change and Expectations on the Paris Agreement', at the inter-sessional in Bonn, June 2015.
- 5 Personal communication, faith group focal point at the UNFCCC, Bonn, June 2014.
- 6 Personal communication, representative of ACT Alliance (coalition of 144 churches and faith-based organizations), June 2014.

7 Personal communication, representative of ACT Alliance, Bonn, June 2014.

8 Personal communication with civil society representatives, Bonn, June 2014.

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11 Translating for politico-epistemic authority

Comparing food safety agencies in Germany and in the UK

Rebecca-Lea Korinek

Introduction

At the beginning of the 2000s, following a series of food safety crises and controversies, notably on bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) outbreaks and genetically modified (GM) food introduction, most European Union (EU) Member States and the EU set up ‘independent’ food safety agencies. These institutional reforms constituted an official acknowledgement of what was perceived to be a widespread crisis of public trust in the way science is used to regulate food-related risks to public health. Granting food safety agencies independence from government ministries represented a first important measure to restore the loss of public trust in risk regulation. In particular, formal independence was intended to demonstrate a credible commitment to ‘sound scientific risk assessment’, a concept which became essential in the political attempt to remedy the epistemic authority of risk regulators.

The concept of ‘independent risk assessment’ and the underlying conceptual separation of ‘scientific risk assessment’ and ‘political risk management’ had previously been adopted by many international institutions such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), following the ‘red book model’ (Millstone 2009, 26; Alam 2014). The 1983 US National Research Council (NRC) report *Risk Assessment in the Federal Government: Managing the Process* (National Research Council 1983), popularly known as ‘the red book’, synthesised emerging concepts of risk assessment and connected them to politically salient issues. The report became a canonical text codifying a reductive probabilistic approach to risk assessment, reducing the meaning of risk to the function of the ‘magnitudes’ and ‘likelihoods’ of a determinate range of ‘outcomes’ (Stirling 2003). According to the red book model, risk assessment should not only be prior to but entirely independent of any and all political, social or other considerations. Only the second stage of the process of ‘risk management’ should include social and political considerations besides the strictly scientific risk assessment (Millstone 2009).

However, there are good reasons to question whether the influence of the red book model on the new governance of food safety is indeed as straightforward as the model’s core concept of ‘sound, independent’ risk assessment seems to suggest.

For what remains particularly puzzling in this regard is the simultaneous framing of the BSE events as a failure of such 'classical-modernist' notions of linear, deterministic or probabilistic risk assessment to acknowledge the unresolved uncertainty and ambiguities that characterised BSE (European Commission 2000; House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology 2000; Phillips, Bridgeman and Ferguson-Smith 2000; Böschén et al. 2000). Institutions that provide risk assessments were confronted with controversies between different social actors with conflicting and incommensurable ecological, economic and social perspectives. Based on subjective values, ethics and ontologies as well as 'cultures of nonknowledge', issues of 'safety', 'acceptance', 'costs' and 'benefits' were framed differently by heterogeneous actors participating in the post-BSE discourse (Stirling 2003; Böschén et al. 2010). Recognising these intractabilities in risk assessment, official reports on post-BSE European risk governance called for an enhancement of the transparency, openness and accountability of risk assessment processes, admitting the public into fora that were previously reserved for scientific risk assessors, and introduced the precautionary principle to define a new form of risk governance (Gottweis 2008; Paul 2009; Millstone 2009).

Hence, by the time of their establishment and in their early years, European food safety agencies had to operate in a 'Janus-faced' discursive environment: on the one hand, they were established as independent agencies conducting sound scientific risk assessments according to the red book model, while at the same time, they were expected to include stakeholders and incorporate democratic norms in the risk assessment process. The resulting conceptual ambiguity of 'risk assessment' became especially apparent when the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) formally adopted a text that more or less explicitly repudiated the red book model because it emphasised the importance of framing assumptions that account for competing risk assessments in the view of the codex (Lee 2009; Millstone 2009). In order to ensure epistemically coherent risk assessments, the codex agreed that members should make their framing assumptions explicit by documenting them in risk assessment guidelines, which it calls 'Risk Assessment Policy' (CAC 2003, 43–44). The codex moved in the direction of more open, cyclical and iterative models of risk assessment, as advocated, for instance, by the International Risk Governance Council (IRGC 2005). From this more comprehensive view of risk governance, the exclusive focus on acting based on probabilistic science as a validation mechanism of risk assessment is problematic, since knowledge of food risks is seen as inherently contestable for both epistemological and normative reasons (Abels, Kobusch and Träsch 2014).

It is this puzzle – apparently 'sound' scientific risk assessments become the basis for political decision-making and at the same time the subject of political struggles and debate – that scholars in science and technology studies (STS) have called the 'paradox of scientific authority' in late modern societies (Bijker, Bal and Hendriks 2009). Late modern, postnational governance is characterised by a fundamental transformation of authority from political to 'politico-epistemic authority' (Straßheim and Korinek 2016; Straßheim 2015) or 'politically assigned epistemic

authorities' (Zürn 2015). However, the authority of scientific risk assessment is not simply a given (Jasanoff 2011). Rather, it is a result of a specific type of practice, namely translating between the in-part contradictory criteria of epistemic validity and political legitimacy: the cultivation of politico-epistemic authority.

This chapter sets out to show how the sociology of translation (Callon 1984) can help us to understand how actors attempt to establish epistemic and political authority in terms of governing risks. The sociology of translation will be used here to reconstruct how transnational concepts and causal stories, such as 'scientific risk assessment' and the narrative of the red book model, are reconfigured with ideas and practices embedded in domestic cultures and traditions – and vice versa – as they move back and forth between the local and the global. Here I employ the sociology of translation specifically to study how local risk governance knowledge gains politico-epistemic authority as the result of a continuous formation of webs of relations between actors, material infrastructures and discourses. The chapter is structured as follows: first, I will theorise about food safety agencies as translators using documents as one of their main translation tools in order to cultivate what I call politico-epistemic authority in the risk assessment discourse. Second, I focus on food safety agencies in Germany and the UK, comparing how they act as translators producing and circulating 'guidance documents' to regulate their risk assessment practices. In conclusion, I argue that the difference between Germany and the UK can be traced in part to the 'civic epistemology' specific to each country, which structures the translational practices of certifying and validating local ways of knowing risks (Jasanoff 2005).

Food safety agencies as translators

As pointed out in the introduction to this volume, translation can be understood as the process by which an actor or a set of actors unites the many into one by speaking in the name of others. Both humans and nonhuman entities end up being represented by a translator who speaks and acts in their name: 'to translate is also to express in one's own language what others say and want, why they act in the way they do and how they associate with each other: it is to establish oneself as a spokesman' (Callon 1984, 223).

The problem with this translation process is, of course, that the object of representation can question whether the spokespersons really are representative and may even rebel against claims of representativity. Translation thus depends on a successful claim to represent. Translation at the science-policy nexus therefore involves a claim to represent objective reality, which is combined, or rather reconciled, with a claim to represent the common will of collective subjects, identities and interests (Voß 2016). Accordingly, organisations situated at the science-policy nexus have a basic institutional interest in creating and cultivating an image of a reliable multilingual 'spokesperson'. In other words, the strength of their translations depends on them being recognised as a voice of both the people and of science as well. They therefore constantly search for allies that might confirm that they are indeed representative spokespersons. The allies who attest to

an actor's representativity need not necessarily be human beings. On the contrary, the translation perspective highlights that, more often than not, it is nonhuman entities in the form of material 'inscriptions' that are the most effective allies (Callon 1984; Latour 1987, 2004). Inscriptions are signs that are materially embodied in some medium, such as statistics, lists, models or diagrams, usually synthesised in a written text, be it in the genre of a scientific article or an official policy document. Organisations at the science-policy interface hence attempt to produce and circulate expertise that is deemed both scientifically valid as well as relevant to the problem at hand (Korinek and Veit 2013).

However, in a situation where no clear rules and norms exist according to which risk analysis should be conducted, expert organisations geared towards the generation of politico-epistemic authority not only attempt to produce authoritative substantial expertise but also to produce expertise in terms of questions of governance (Voß and Freeman 2016; Esguerra 2017). To understand how the politico-epistemic authority of expert organisations operating in fields of 'institutional void' – here food safety agencies – is cultivated, I therefore will look at how they manufacture, use and circulate a specific type of 'inscription', that is, 'guidance documents' defining the principles of risk assessment. Before we do so, let me introduce the conceptionalisation of documents as 'inscriptions' in more detail.

Translating by means of documents

Documents can be studied as inscriptions incorporating and combining several heterogeneous inscription devices, such as diagrams, graphs, statistics and transcripts. The capacity of inscriptions to translate relies on the combination of two important material properties: immutability and mobility. Through writing and visualisation, inscriptions are made immutable, that is, they render what is contested and not-yet-fixed immutable in textual or visual representations. 'They juxtapose elements, suggest their appropriate relationships, and they simultaneously make an argument about how the reader should fit into that world' (Callon, Law and Rip 1986, 223). Heterogeneous bits and pieces, such as chloroformed specimens, microbe colonies stuck into gelatine and fishermen's nets are made docile and linked together in a piece of paper to frame problems and mobilise solutions (Latour 1987, 45). Yet, textual inscriptions are not merely able to display such heterogeneity; they also have the 'capacity to act at a distance upon the world in all its diversity' and 'impose a structure on the world' (Law 1986a, 49). Because they are materially embodied, they are ready to use; they are directly available to everyone from everywhere and are presentable to everyone's gaze. As material representations, they can move around and travel across time and space, while still holding their shape.

Inscriptions function as instruments of coordination among the heterogeneous interests of actors from different worlds, which is usually an important part of the work of policy documents (Freeman and Maybin 2011). Documents can enable both cooperation and conflict among heterogeneous actors. They can bring new actor constellations into being, as they are abstract enough to be flexibly

interpreted and concrete enough to gain attention and enrol actors across the world of policy and science. Actors can relate to them according to their own interests and use them in their own concrete terms, while at the same time they remain a fixed common reference point in policy discourses (Korinek and Veit 2013).

In public policy-making, it is often sets of documents or 'document networks' (Simons 2016) that lend particular concepts and broader discourses their authority. Policy documents generate other documents – documents multiply (Freeman and Maybin 2011). White papers, for instance, are followed by written consultation procedures, in which responses are summarised into consultation reports again followed by the government's response to the publication report. Hence, documents are both enabled and constrained by previous documents and they enable and constrain further documents (Simons 2016, 181). To understand the authority generating power of documents, we must therefore look at how documents draw on one another. Direct references to other documents enrol these as allies that attest to the validity and relevance of the claim made. Just as in scientific papers, where references are 'aids which increase a paper's power to persuade' (Gilbert 1977, 120), references in policy documents enrol 'a previous and distant author(ity)' in persuading the reader at the same time as, conversely, enrolling the reader in allegiance to that author' (Freeman and Maybin 2011, 161). They thereby reciprocally validate each other (Gilbert 1977). Besides making direct references, documents can draw on one another more indirectly as well by providing concurring narratives, interpretive templates and scripts.

Finally, it should be recalled that, as in any translation practice, the production and use of documents 'never operates in a vacuum'. It can only obtain authority 'if (a) its components have force at the point where the text is received and (b) they are recognised as having been *properly* borrowed and juxtaposed' (Law 1986b, 68, emphasis added). Consequently, Law concludes, 'the appropriate array of forces has to be found that will translate or enrol that reader' (Law 1986b, 68–69). Hence, the translations enabled by documents are themselves enabled and constrained by local discursive and institutional contexts determining what counts as 'properly borrowed and juxtaposed' (Law 1986b, 68–69).

The cases

The cases of food safety agencies in Germany and in the UK are particularly suitable settings for comparatively studying the generation of politico-epistemic authority. As set out in the introduction, both countries fundamentally reorganised the institutions responsible for food safety policy in response to the BSE crisis. The science-policy interface in turn, never a politically salient issue but rather one framed purely technically, became a front-stage political theme. In Germany, the former Federal Institute for Health Protection of Consumer and Veterinary Medicine (BgVV) was dissolved, and two new agencies were created in its place: a scientific risk assessment and risk communication agency, the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR); and a risk management agency, the Federal Office of Consumer Protection (BVL). Hence, the strict separation of

scientific risk assessment and political risk management, which has been advocated by the above-introduced red book model of the US NRC, was implemented here not only conceptually but also formally and organisationally.¹ The UK, in contrast, interpreted the red book's 'separation model' conceptionally rather than formally. Responsibilities for food safety policy, including both assessing and regulating risks, were delegated to the newly created Food Standards Agency (FSA). While the institutional reforms in both countries referred to the 'red book orthodoxy', either conceptionally as in the UK or formally as in Germany, the new agencies in both countries were keen to emphasise the importance of stakeholder participation, 'two-way dialogue' and public engagement in rebuilding public trust, thereby opening risk assessment to a more inclusive approach. My empirical analysis of how the new agencies attempt to establish epistemic and political authority in terms of governing risks against this backdrop draws on data from desk research and different fieldwork sources. These include guidance documents published between 2000 and 2015; 38 interviews with agency officials conducted between 2012 and 2014, as well as personal participation in several public events and meetings held by the agencies under study.²

The British Food Standards Agency

The Government was preoccupied with preventing an alarmist over-reaction to BSE because it believed that the risk was remote. It is now clear that this campaign of reassurance was a mistake. When on 20 March 1996 the Government announced that BSE had probably been transmitted to humans, the public felt that they had been betrayed.

(Phillips et al. 2000, xviii)

In his official inquiry into the BSE crisis, Lord Phillips concluded that 'at the heart of the BSE story, lie the questions of how to handle hazard – a known hazard to cattle and an unknown hazard to humans' (Phillips et al. 2000, xviii). The main lessons to be learned by the newly established FSA should therefore concern the institutionalisation of a culture of openness and precaution when dealing with uncertainties and ignorance. Indeed, his recommendations to improve science advice barely use the terminology of conventional probabilistic risk assessment. Instead, the focus is on elements of a more open, iterative and reflexive way of knowing risks: such as the inclusion of lay members in expert committees; institutionalised dialogue between scientific actors and policy-makers; the acknowledgement of framing assumptions underlying risk assessment; advice on different options and alternatives, rather than on an ostensibly definitive assessment of risk that amounts to prescriptive recommendations; and, above all, openness not only in terms of knowledge uncertainties but also in terms of ignorance and ambiguity (Phillips et al. 2000, 261–266).

Half a year after the BSE inquiry report had been given to the government, in 16 volumes with a total of some 4000 pages, the newly established FSA published a paper, titled *Lessons to be Learned from the Report of the BSE Inquiry* (FSA 2001c). The declared purpose of this paper was to identify the key findings

of the report that would apply to the new agency, which saw its own creation as ‘the result of the Government’s recognition of the need for change in the wake of the BSE story’ (FSA 2001c, 6). To underline the FSA’s commitment to an abrupt change from the previous status quo, which had just been unmasked as a ‘culture of secrecy’ by the Phillips Inquiry, the report pointed to the agency’s new set of guidance documents, ranging from broader, principles-based ‘founding documents’ to more operational guidelines. It was claimed that these should demonstrate that the agency is living up to its ‘core values’ of ‘putting the consumers first, openness and independence’.

Blackboxing

As one of the first guidance documents published in its early years in the aftermath of the BSE crisis, the FSA published the *Statement of General Objectives and Practices. Putting the Consumer First* (FSA 2000a). After enumerating broadly defined ‘general objectives’ and ‘working practices’, the nine-page document provides a more detailed account of its governance principles. These are grouped under several subheadings. The paragraphs under the subheading titled ‘Openness and consultation’ (FSA 2000a, 6) declare that the FSA will be ‘accessible to and actively communicate with’ all its stakeholders. Its ‘decisions and the information on which they are based will be recorded and accessible’. This is to include an ‘annual report’ on the agency’s ‘performance’ in relation to its ‘openness policies’. Moreover, it is stated that the FSA will ‘ensure that all relevant parties are given the opportunity . . . and the time to make their views known, including representatives of those affected by any proposed activity and the public’. To ensure that the FSA ‘listens properly and establishes productive dialogues’ a ‘consultation policy’ is to be published.

The next subheading, titled ‘Consistent and proportionate: the Agency’s approach to risk’ (FSA 2000a, 7), states that the agency is to publish a document regulating its ‘approach to risk’ based on the following principles: ‘adopt a consistent approach’; ‘make decisions . . . proportionate to the associated risk’; ‘take due account of the nature and magnitude of the risks involved, of the costs and benefits of proposed actions, of the information provided by the relevant independent advisory committees and to any other appropriate sources of expertise’. Further subheadings in the document address ‘best practice’ and ‘better regulation’. Moreover, the statement announces that the FSA is going to consult on further, more detailed guidance both in terms of its ‘openness policy’ and its ‘approach to risk’.

A few months later, launching the UK-wide written consultation in a press release on the agency’s website, Chairman Sir John Krebs said: ‘These two documents will greatly influence the way in which the Food Standards Agency operates. This is why it is important for us to know what stakeholders and the general public think about them’ (FSA 2000b). Below the chairman’s statement, the terms of reference for the consultation exercise are detailed, pointing the interested reader to the linked ‘consultation package’ to be downloaded from the ‘consultation website’. The consultation package then includes the two guidance documents as well as the consultation forms.

Here we see how the document translates almost incommensurable ways of knowing risks into a natural-seeming set of principles for approaching risks. On the one hand, the emphasis on openness and stakeholder participation clearly chimes with the recommendations of the Phillips Inquiry and suggests a deliberative, participatory and comprehensive way of knowing risks. On the other hand, the document assembles indirect references to the more linear and scientific representation of risk knowledge that is based on outcomes and likelihoods, on costs and benefits. It is almost impossible to miss the many indirect references to the Cabinet Office's 'better regulation' agenda promoting the 'reduction of administrative burdens' and 'increase of regulatory effectiveness' (BRTF 1998; Cabinet Office 2002). The reconciliation between these heterogeneous representations of risk knowledge is enabled by their segmentation into two subheadings. Moreover, by announcing that specific policies on both openness and risk assessment are to follow, the statement suggests the agency's responsiveness to heterogeneous demands on risk assessment. Almost imperceptibly, the document hereby simultaneously establishes a route for the reader to travel. As these snapshots show, it is the materiality of documents, both physical and digital, that enables not only the assemblage of heterogeneous ideas and concepts but also the enrolment of different actors in this undertaking.

Hence, let us follow the documentary pathways by looking more closely at the mentioned *Code of Practice of Openness* (FSA 2001a). The document codifies how the FSA should act according to its core values of transparency and openness. It should treat the publication of any information, explanatory material or research findings on which decisions are based as the norm and only deviate from this norm in special cases. The code furthermore not only asks the agency to regularly undertake written stakeholder consultation at an early stage of the policy-making process but also to hold its regular board meetings in public. The agendas, policy papers and minutes of these public board meetings should be published on the FSA website. By the same token, the code requests the FSA scientific advisory committees to be as open as possible at all stages of the risk assessment process, particularly by holding open meetings and publishing the agendas, papers and minutes. However, while at first sight these provisions clearly constitute a radical change from the past practices of 'secret' knowledge production in closed-shop expert circles, viewed close up the code does not fully replace past understandings of doing risk assessments. Rather, the code displaces pre-existing ways of knowing risks into the new post-BSE context without implying a full rupture with past standards. This becomes apparent when the document argues that the FSA's new transparent and open approach is consistent with established guidance on risk assessment: 'This is in line with the conclusions of the Review of Risk Procedures used by the Government's Advisory Committees dealing with food safety, led by the Chief Scientific Advisor, Sir Robert May' (FSA 2001a, paragraph 3.4).

This sentence erupting in the paragraph dealing with the openness of the agency's scientific advisory committees will seem so subtle to the observant reader, who may be interested in the agency's innovative, more open approach to risk assessment but does not know his/her way around the 'guideline jungle', that he/she

may not notice the underlying friction. This is achieved by simply referencing the government's chief scientific advisor's report; instead of repeating the 'conclusions of the review of the risk procedures' and explaining why and to what extent the code relates to them, it simply references the chief advisor's report. Only when looking at the cited 'May report' in more detail do we begin to discover the friction between the cited May report and the *Code of Practice of Openness*:

7. It is *sometimes, but by no means always*, appropriate for risk assessments to be highly complex exercises. The value of formal risk assessment lies in the rigour with which the hazards and the populations exposed are identified, risks are estimated and uncertainties exposed. However, the outcomes of some risk assessment exercises may appear to provide clear and precise information about the level of risk, when this is not the case. If little hard scientific data was available for the risk assessment process, then the outcome will be as imprecise as the assumptions and judgements that went into it.

(May 2000, 4, emphasis added)

Paragraph 7 of the May report carefully balances the pros and cons of the established linear, quantifying and probabilistic 'formal risk assessment' approach, which understands evidence as a narrow and strictly scientific undertaking based on probabilistic evidence – as compared with a comprehensive, open, cyclical and iterative approach to risk assessment in which evaluative expert judgement of stakeholders and public consultation are also understood as valid forms of evidence. While the latter 'is sometimes, but by no means always, appropriate' the 'value' of 'formal risk assessments' lies in the 'rigour' of hazard and exposure assessments. Conventional linear, probabilistic risk assessment here is represented as the 'standard' way to generate valid knowledge on risks, while the more open and iterative approach codified in the FSA *Code of Practice of Openness* is declared to be an exception from this standard. Hence, this differs profoundly from what is represented as the innovative – and standard – way of knowing food risks in the agency's *Code of Practice of Openness*. Despite the claimed general advantage of the straightforward formal risk assessments over more 'complex' undertakings, paragraph 7 further argues, the apparently clear and precise information about risk levels may be misleading if 'little hard scientific data was available'. Paragraph 7 thus problematises the established linear model of probabilistic risk assessment. However, here it appears that the 'new' approach of more open, inclusive and cyclical risk assessment is in fact incorporated into the old framework rather than the other way around.

The next paragraph claims to provide the critical reader with some clarification, yet, once again, here we are referred to a further governmental guidance document:

8. When carrying out risk assessments, committees should therefore bear in mind the principles set out in the Office of Science and Technology (OST) guidelines on 'The Use of Scientific Advice in Policy Making'. These principles are particularly relevant where there is scientific uncertainty,

a range of scientific opinion and/or potentially significant implications for sensitive areas of public policy.

(May 2000, 4)

Following this reference, after some renewed research in the government's web archive, we come upon a snapshot of a two-page document, published back in 1997 – prior to the establishment of the FSA – setting out principles to be followed by all government departments when using and presenting scientific advice and evidence. Paragraph 9 is dedicated to risk assessment:

9. In practice, deliberations frequently involve a risk assessment of one type or another. Separate guidance on risk assessment is listed in the *Annex*.

(May 1997, 2, emphasis added)

Since the start of our search for some clarification on the question of how the new open and iterative approach to risk assessment set out in the *FSA Code of Practice of Openness* (FSA 2000a) relates to establishing the standards of more formalised and linear risk assessments, it turns out that we are now referred to further guidance documents for the fourth time:

Annex

Useful References

- *Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Second Edition)*, Cabinet Office (OPS), 1997
- *Code of Practice on Access to Government Information: Guidance on Interpretation (Second Edition)*, Cabinet Office (OPS), 1997
- *Policy Appraisal and the Environment*, Department of the Environment, HMSO, 1991
- *A Guide to Risk Assessment and Risk Management for Environmental Protection*, Department of the Environment, HMSO, 1995
- *Safety In Numbers? Risk Assessment in Environmental Protection*, Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology, June 1996
- *Going Public: An Introduction to Communicating Science, Engineering and Technology*, DTI Publications, 1996
- *Generic Terms and Concepts in the Assessment and Regulation of Industrial Risks*, Discussion Document, HSE Books, 1995
- *Use of Risk Assessment Within Government Departments*, Report of the Interdepartmental Liaison Group on Risk Assessment, HSE Books, 1996
- *The Setting of Safety Standards*, A Report by An Interdepartmental Group and External Advisors, HM Treasury, June 1996
- *Risk: Analysis, Perception and Management*, Report of a Royal Society Study Group, The Royal Society, London, 1992
- *The Tolerability of Risks from Nuclear Powers Stations*, HMSO, 1992
- *Policy Appraisal and Health*, Department of Health, 1995
- *Regulation in the Balance*, HMSO 1996
- *On the State of the Public Health 1995*, HMSO, 1996

Figure 11.1 Useful references (emphasis added).

Here we are recommended six further documents promising to represent ‘useful references’ on risk assessment standards, some of which go back to 1992. Now it becomes very clear that the ‘old’ standards with their focus on linear and exclusively scientific risk assessment have not been suddenly replaced by the set of guidance documents published in the early years of the FSA; rather those standards have been gradually displaced through a chain of references to the backstage of archived earlier guidance documents. What this chain of guidance documents in fact does is reconcile ‘new’ with ‘past’ practices and knowledge infrastructures – as long as the tensions and inconsistencies between them are eventually blackboxed.

We keep following the above-established documentary traces and scrutinise the FSA’s *Approach to Risk*, which begins by citing paragraph 2 of the 1999 Food Standards Act:

The main objective of the Agency in carrying out its functions is to *protect public health from risks* which may arise in connection with the consumption of food . . . and otherwise to *protect the interests of consumers* in relation to food.
(FSA 2001b, 1, emphasis added)

It continues by stating its commitment to this objective, which follows in a remarkably short paragraph:

1.2. *Everybody* is faced with risks of one sort or another in their daily lives. They make up their *own minds* on how they *choose* to handle them. They make *simple individual choices* like when to cross the road and whether to make a journey.
(FSA 2001b, 1, emphasis added)

While the Food Standards Act defines the function of the FSA as the protection of ‘public health from risk’ and of ‘the interests of consumers’,³ the FSA’s *Approach to Risk* reframes this task in terms invoking the individual consumer ‘choosing’ how to handle risk and making ‘simple individual choices.’⁴ While, as we have previously seen, the *Statement of General Objectives and Practices* chimed with the agenda of ‘better regulation’, the *Approach to Risk* indirectly refers to New Labour’s programme of public service reform, which – inspired by the neo-classical economic model of the consumer – put ‘individual choice’ at centre stage (Clarke et al. 2007, 24). Yet, as scholars in public policy have shown, this managerialist understanding of state-society relationships has been far more contested, even within New Labour, than this paragraph suggests (Clarke et al. 2006). Consequently, it is not very surprising that the above-cited paragraph – taken from the 1999 Food Standards Act, which had to work its way through the parliamentary process – is lacking in managerial language. Again, it is the form and the genre of the ‘guidance document’ that enables this translation.

This translation, however, is apt to be readily overseen, since paragraph 3.2. below, titled ‘Assessing the risk’ more easily attracts the immediate attention of

the critical reader interested in the FSA's *Approach to Risk* (as compared to the above-presented preamble-like, short introductory paragraph which appears rather unsuspecting to the critical eye searching for standards in approaching risks):

Our *standard approach to risk assessment* will be to seek the advice of experts, generally working in specialist independent Advisory Committees. All these committees include *representatives of consumers* as well as scientists. *We expect these committees to work openly, so that anyone who is interested can see what they are doing and how they do it.* Committee papers, agendas and minutes will be published on the Agency's website (www.food.gov.uk).

(FSA 2001b, 3, emphasis added)

Hence, the critical reader interested in the FSA's standard approach to risk assessment in the aftermath of the BSE crisis is here assured of a more open and inclusive approach to risk assessment. In contrast to the short introductory paragraph, this paragraph invokes the consumer as a stakeholder contributing as an expert to the assessment of risks. Moreover, by following the link to the agency's website 'anyone' interested in the operations of the agency can see how it is doing risk assessments with his/her own eyes. Within the scope of this chapter, we cannot continue tracing the practical implementation and all the multiple revisions of the guidelines presented here. I will offer only one small hint: in practice, consumers are participating as 'lay persons' in the scientific advisory committees.

Remember the Phillips Inquiry, which I used as an entry point of our journey of FSA guidance documents. To deal with the challenge of fundamental uncertainties in knowing risks, Phillips recommended the adoption of 'a more comprehensive and open way of generating knowledge on food risks with a focus on the precautionary approach'. Paragraph 4 of the FSA's *Approach to Risk*, titled 'When the risks are not clear' tames the epistemic problem of fundamental uncertainty by translating it into a problem of rather simple uncertainty, manageable through the collection of more scientific expertise and the quantitative 'modelling' of uncertainties and 'cost-benefit' analysis: when 'scientific information is less precise', 'experts usually deal with this by applying safety factors'. If the problem 'is a new one' the FSA's risk assessors are to be asked to 'weigh all the evidence carefully' and to tell the FSA 'how much uncertainty there is'. 'Precautionary action' is to be taken 'in proportion to the risk, the consequences of the proposed action, and the level of uncertainty' (FSA 2001b, 4). Moreover, the problem of expert dissent is also to be resolved by the standard scientific practice of conducting further research (FSA 2001b, 4), notwithstanding the incommensurable frames of socio-technical problems, such as food safety.

Unboxing

What we have seen so far is how the multiple displacements enabled by documents were able to bring together heterogeneous elements, while the displacements

themselves have slid ever more into the background until they eventually become fully blackboxed. However, black boxes can only hide inconsistencies and tensions temporarily, that is, until they are noticed and re-opened: when the FSA executive presented its *Code of Practice of Openness* as a means of demonstrating its commitment to the lessons learned from the Phillips Inquiry to its governing board, the document was appreciated as an important step 'toward addressing the procedural failures identified by the Phillips Inquiry' (FSA 2001d, 10). At the same time, however, some board members also pointed to difficulties. The 'real problems' they argued, arose in dealing with the uncertainty caused by the implementation of the code within the agency. 'This issue . . . constituted the major on-going challenge for the FSA' (FSA 2001d, 10). As the minutes of the meeting show, what was questioned was precisely the FSA's narrow, scientific representation of risk:

Board members suggested that a framework be developed for testing the Agency's responses to *short, medium and long term uncertainty*. . . . This should enhance a culture of continuous questioning and challenge within the Agency itself and its supporting advisory committees, and which recognised the potential contribution of *dissenting voices*. . . . *Groups outside government* should also be able to bring to the Agency's attention areas where information was not available.

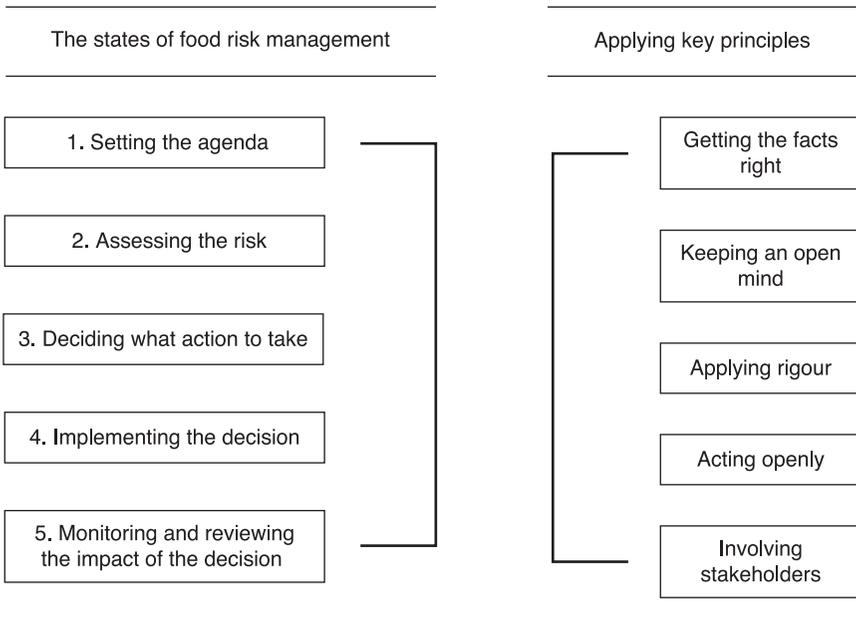
(FSA 2001c, emphasis added)

The board members also pointed to the upcoming review of the scientific committees conducted by the Government Office of Science and Technology (GOS). For the first time in its history, the GOS had met with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the draft review report; as a result, the final report recommended the public documentation of uncertainties and ambiguities of risk assessment findings by spelling out the framing assumptions that underlie any specific risk assessment (FSA 2002a, 2).

Re-boxing: the so-called Post-Phillips Framework

One year later, the FSA published another guidance document in response, the 'Post-Phillips Framework' (FSA 2002b). This document provides the board with a ready-to-use checklist reducing the 4000-page-long Phillips Report to five stages of action in the management of food risks to each of which five principles were to be applied, visualised by Figure 11.2.

The attached checklist provides five questions for each stage. In this representation of the lessons of the BSE crisis, the undertaking of 'formal risk assessments' (point 2) appears as a necessary component of the proposed way of assessing risks, i.e. the inclusion of stakeholders (point 5):



Checklist – Assessing the risk

- Are we using our in-house scientific expertise?
Are we consulting scientific experts representing all major viewpoints?
Are we taking steps to clarify areas of scientific uncertainty?
- Are we taking account of conflicting views?
- Are we undertaking a formal risk assessment?
Are we distinguishing adequately between known risk and areas of scientific uncertainty?
- Are we publishing our risk assessment, and the facts underpinning it?
Are we being open and honest about areas of uncertainty?
- Are we asking stakeholders to contribute to the risk assessment?

Figure 11.2 Applying the lessons of BSE to food risk management.

The power of these guidance documents thus lies in their ability to undergo many small transformations, thereby adapting to new situations. They creatively recombine different standards and templates at hand.

Reciprocal validation

When following the trajectories of such guidance documents that regulate the production and use of knowledge in the FSA, I came across more than 54 such

documents published, revised and updated by the FSA and its scientific advisory committees since the agency's establishment in 2000. Over time, ever more frameworks, specifying guidelines and checklists were developed to reconcile heterogeneous ideas and discourses promoting different – not tension-free – ways of knowing food risks. In the attempt to replace its culture of secrecy with a culture of openness, accountability and transparency, the FSA thus established a web of guidelines and meta-guidelines.

The FSA and its advisory committees are, however, regulated for their part by several frameworks and good practice guidelines, and meta-guidelines. These cross-departmental guidelines stipulate that departments and agencies are to formulate specifying guidelines, codes of conduct and review programmes. They range from the 'magenta book' regulating evaluation designs to the 'green book' on the use of evidence and evaluations published by the Treasury (HM Treasury 2011, 2014), or the *Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees* produced by the Government Office for Science (OST 2001), just to name the most prominent examples. Many of these cross-departmental frameworks and meta-guidelines were formulated by bodies mandated with the task of ensuring the coherence of evidence-based policy-making across government. Moreover, the FSA regularly undergoes internal and external reviews and evaluations in which both the government-wide meta-guidance documents and its own guidelines are used as a standard by which to conduct these evaluations. By mutually reformulating and referencing one another, these documents form a dense circular network of standards and guidance documents serving as a means of 'reciprocal validation' (Gilbert 1977).

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)

The entry point into the case of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is different from the one I chose for the FSA. When I started my desk research for this study on the agencies' websites, it quickly became clear that the two cases differed greatly in terms of documentary practices. Visiting the FSA's website, I immediately came across an unmanageable number of all types of documents. Whereas the FSA *Code of Practice on Openness* called for online publication of not only the minutes but also all the agendas and papers of the meetings of scientific advisory committees, I could only find some very short minutes for the BfR advisory committees. I thus decided to make this the starting point of my first expert interviews with BfR members:

- I: How is risk assessment coordinated here, internally?
- R: We have, it sounds terribly boring on the one hand, nonetheless it's deemed useful and accepted by the people on the other hand; we follow a certain guideline. This guideline lays out exactly what to write where under which section, just like a DFG [German Research Council] proposal. There we introduced the wording of how to define a risk since it simply cannot depend on whether Person X or Y from division A or B thinks that the risk is high, semi-high, very likely or predictable. We came up with categories in a rough analogy to package leaflets of medications in order to assess when to label a

risk in a certain way and how to compose a risk assessment with the help of a grey box, which is an understandable text written by us.

I: And do the risk assessors follow the guideline?

R: This is still an ongoing process with everlasting problems, for instance when new people arrive. . . . So, I made a gentleman's agreement and came up with a 'no-go list' that contains typical wordings. . . . They follow it strictly to avoid my bad mood when I continuously have to correct the exact same mistakes (*laughs*). For example, we apparently always *find* certain measurements here to which I respond that you can *find* mushrooms in the forest, however, measurements are not to be *found* but *verified*. Therefore, it sometimes appears to be forced due to the repeated use of the correction mode, not to use *find* but *verify*. So, this, for example, isn't in the guideline, . . . these no-go lists are such small things that would appear a little bit strange. If we put that in the guideline, one would think 'okay', what are these people actually worrying about?

I: Okay this is very interesting, and the guidance document –

R: It reads terribly boring. In the beginning my first thought was 'Yikes!' Do we really want to publish it? And then we noticed that there was a big interest in it! There was a real excitement which surprised me! Also, I think they finally recognised that there is a certain strategy of the house behind it! Then I thought all right, they want know how to structure it [the risk assessment report] strategically and we subsequently had it translated into English! We also issue it as a small handbook since there is always a demand for it. In this exact moment and next week, we are hosting a summer school and there the people, there are about 40 internationals right now after receiving hundreds of applications, here to learn about how we, how Germany conducts risk assessment and . . . how to describe what to do at first and what is important about a categorisation and classification of risks which they find to be very exciting. I found it relatively dull; however, the benefits of its application are noticeable, even though it looks boring at first sight.

(Official, BfR, my translation)

As this sequence shows, when asked about how the internal processes of risk assessment were coordinated inside the BfR, my interview partner immediately pointed out the *Guidance Document for Health Assessments* (BfR 2010) to me. This document defines a 'standard for the depiction of BfR health assessments' (BfR 2010, 5). On the one hand, it regulates how to carefully structure risk assessments reports; 'just like a DFG proposal', it has to be strictly structured in compliance with the proposal preparation instructions of the German Research Council (DFG). According to this guidance, risk assessment reports should start with a small grey box, not longer than one paragraph, including an unambiguously formulated 'take home message' for stakeholders and the general public (BfR 2010, 12). As a ministerial official explained to me, the grey box is much appreciated, since it provides a very 'brief and concise summary' of the most important information, which makes the report comprehensible and practicable (Official,

- (32) The scientific assessment and other BfR Opinions should contain a **title** and the following main chapters:
- ▶ Subject of the assessment
 - ▶ Results
 - ▶ Rationale
- (33) The structure of the document can be customised to suit the request by adjusting the **subchapters**. The structure can be adjusted individually to suit the subject of the Opinion. Which topics are subject to BfR Opinions are listed in Chapter III, p. 19 et seqq.
- (34) An Opinion is usually sent out as an **annex to a cover letter**. The cover letter may contain information concerning the results, the dissemination to third parties or confidentiality.

BfR Health Assessment		Date
Annex		Date
1	Title	
2	Subject of the assessment	
3	Results	
4	Rationale	
4.1	Risk assessment	
4.1.1	Hazard identification	
4.1.2	Hazard characterisation	
4.1.3	Exposure assessment	
4.1.4	Risk characterisation	
4.2	Other aspects	
4.3	Risk management options, Recommended measures	
5	References	

Figure 11.3 Structure of BfR health assessment reports according to the Guidance Document for Health Assessments (BfR 2010).

Ministry of Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer Protection; see Figure 11.4 showing an example of the ‘grey box’).

Besides the structure of the assessment reports, the guidance document also standardises the use of terminology in a number of respects: risk characterisation, codifying scientific uncertainties, the concordant use of legal terms and recommended management options (BfR 2010, 6–24). To create forceful wording that suggests objectivity, primarily numerical descriptions should be used for risk probability (‘occurred in x out of y cases’ instead of ‘occurs often’). Such harmonisation of the terminology used in risk assessments is seen as a challenge, since the different disciplines within the BfR traditionally use different terms. The guidelines are meant to ensure ‘unambiguous and coherent’ reports, which should be based preferably on ‘internationally recognised nomenclature’ (BfR 2010, 7). Hence, the guidance document presents ambiguity in risk assessment as something to be ‘reduced’ by the standardisation of *termini technici* and something to be ‘resolved’ exclusively by scientific experts:

If there are different scientific views on a point critical to the result of an Opinion, these are to be indicated transparently. . . . Other scientists are then able to form their own opinion on the issue based on the explication.
(BfR 2010, 7)

The document envisages a role for stakeholder participation only in what it defines as ‘risk communication’ that ‘refers to the purpose-specific exchange of risk information and opinions between stakeholders’ and ‘should follow’ the key basic rules of

Neue Daten zu gesundheitlichen Aspekten von Glyphosat? Eine aktuelle, vorläufige Facheinschätzung des BfR (in Englisch)

New data on health aspects of Glyphosate? A current, preliminary assessment by BfR

Stellungnahme Nr. 035/2011 des BfR vom 7. Juli 2011

Glyphosat ist ein herbizider Wirkstoff, der in verschiedenen Pflanzenschutzmitteln eingesetzt wird. Das Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (BfR) wurde vom Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz gebeten, aus der Sicht der Bewertung des Risikos von Pflanzenschutzmitteln zu den gesundheitlichen Aspekten Stellung zu nehmen. Grundlage dessen bildeten die Publikation einer Nichtregierungsorganisation (NGO) und die Bitte der Europäischen Kommission, dass Deutschland als Berichtersteller für den Wirkstoff Glyphosat im Rahmen der europäischen Pflanzenschutzmittelzulassung den Bericht kommentieren möge.

Das BfR kommt zum Schluss, dass der in Frage stehende Bericht der NGO nur wenige neue Fakten enthält und daß dessen relevante Aspekte in der gesundheitlichen Bewertung des Wirkstoffes Glyphosat durch verschiedene internationale Gremien bereits Berücksichtigung fanden. Der wesentliche fachliche Dissens besteht dagegen in einem grundlegend unterschiedlichen wissenschaftlichen Ansatz zu der Bewertung gesundheitlicher Risiken von Chemikalien. Solche Paradigmenwechsel sollten nach Ansicht des BfR erst von der Fachwelt geprüft und auch in internationalen Gremien auf ihre Notwendigkeit hin diskutiert werden.

Die vorliegende Stellungnahme diene der Information der Europäischen Kommission und wurde auf Englisch verfasst. Sie wird deshalb nur in englischer Sprache auf der BfR-Homepage veröffentlicht.

1. Subject of the assessment

In its responsibility as Rapporteur Member State for glyphosate in preparation of Annex I inclusion in 2002, Germany was asked by the Commission to express its preliminary opinion on the facts listed in the recently published report "Roundup and birth defects.

Figure 11.4 Front cover of the report *New Data on Health Aspects of Glyphosate?* showing 'grey box'.

transparent, comprehensible and useful risk communication' (BfR 2010, 6–7). Knowing the risks related to the production and consumption of food here is represented as a practice of asking whether food is safe in the narrowest scientific sense. The severity of adverse effects is to be categorised, the document stipulates, as 'mild', 'slight', 'moderate' or 'serious', and the probability of the occurrence as 'practically impossible', 'improbable', 'possible', 'probable' or 'certain' (BfR 2010, 8). Remarkably, there is no reference to the critics of the linear red book model of risk assessment, who point to the epistemic incommensurabilities and nonpredictabilities inherent in complex, dynamic and interdependent fields, such as the food-agriculture-ecosystem nexus (Böschchen et al. 2002). The document ignores

such complexities for the benefit of framing food risks as something that appear rather unproblematic and relatively familiar, requiring the 'sound' application of established methods of risk assessment ('package leaflets of medications'). This representation of food risks is further sustained by the BfR's 56-page *Guidelines on Uncertainty Analysis in Exposure Assessments*, published in 2015. According to the guidelines, uncertainty in exposure assessments is to be reduced by 'simple sensitivity analysis' that supports the identification of important (sensitive) parts of the model to perform a detailed modelling (BfR 2015, 10).

Hence, both guidance documents serve to construe a specific way of knowing risks as both scientifically valid and politically relevant. The strict structure and terminology defined in the guidance document makes the risk assessment reports appear objective and sound, and relevant at the same time for political decision-making (e.g. by placing a simple and clear 'take home message' in the 'grey box' at the beginning of the reports). Such a microregulation of documentation practices is a rather precarious undertaking, however. As the above-presented sequence shows, it has to be carefully decided which documentary microregulations can indeed qualify as standardisations of *termini technici* and therefore be allowed to be included in more formal and publicly available guidance documents, and which ones should be concealed from the public in internal documents, such as the BfR's 'no-go list' mentioned by my interviewee. Moreover, the strength of documents as a translation device depends on the extent to which key actors subscribe to them. The development of the BfR's *Guidance Document for Health Assessments* took several years and was compiled by the inter-divisional working group on 'internal coordination'. This enabled a discussion of the draft guideline first at staff level before it passed upward to the heads of divisions. While the document was compiled internally without the involvement of external actors, the 59-page and hence extremely detailed *Guidelines on Uncertainty Analysis in Exposure Assessments* was developed with the participation of the BfR expert panel for exposure assessment and exposure standardisation. This enabled, on the one hand, the mobilisation of external peers for the BfR's standardisation of uncertainty analysis, which is increasingly debated among risk assessment experts. On the other hand, the involvement of its external advisors also allowed the BfR to publish these much more detailed guidelines as a 'recommendation' issued by its external advisory committee, instead of as its 'own' guidance and hence a self-established standard against which the BfR was to be evaluated.

Reciprocal validation

The BfR's guidelines include multiple references to other guidelines from international organisations such as the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the WHO, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the OECD. By doing so, the BfR not only acknowledges these institutions as authoritative sources, it also draws on them as sources lending authority to its own guidelines. Moreover, the BfR does not merely reproduce what is said in other guidelines and regulations; through its guidance documents, it also

interprets and channels them in a way that supports its own approach to risk assessment, which puts a strong emphasis on legal-bureaucratic formalisation and standardisation. For instance, according to its *Guidance Document on Health Assessments*, the phrase ‘health risks cannot be excluded’ should be avoided as it has no merit in a court of law (BfR 2010, 8). The concordant use of legal terms as stipulated in the guidance documents is meant to support the coherence of the BfR’s reports. Therefore, the document entails a list with the most important legal terms and specifications and their legal sources, e.g. the ‘precautionary principle’ as defined by the European Commission (BfR 2010, 23). The legal-bureaucratic character of the BfR’s documentary practices and its focus on demonstrating its compliance with internationally recognised standards find expression in the fact that the agency’s internal decision-making processes have been certified by the International Standards Organization (ISO), since 2010. The certification marked the conclusion of a long and costly procedure involving the meticulous documentation of all knowledge production and decision-making processes in a ‘quality management handbook’ and further ‘procedure instructions’. These documents were meant to ensure that risk assessment results ‘can be retraced and critically evaluated at any time’ (BfR 2014). The guideline’s and certification’s strategic use is seen in their function as quality management tools, which in turn safeguard the BfR’s scientists in disputes with other experts as well as demonstrating the transparency of its risk assessment. As a ministerial official explained to me, ‘everyone interested can go and see in detail how risk assessments are conducted by the BfR’ (Official, Ministry of Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer Protection).

Throughout the interviews, the BfR’s legal-bureaucratic approach to risk assessment was seen as a crucial tool, assisting it on its path to becoming a ‘reference authority’ that can provide rules for resolving dissent among experts both nationally and internationally, which is the agency’s declared strategy (BfR 2012; see also Korinek and Veit 2015). The BfR is currently the only federal agency and even the only agency worldwide with an ISO certification for risk assessment processes, as the BfR’s president, who sees his institution as a setter of national and international benchmarks, is keen on emphasising. As we have seen in the sequence above, the BfR guidelines soon became recognised as a forceful instrument to enrol the reader into its risk assessment epistemology, not only by the BfR members themselves but also by other risk assessment agencies from other countries participating in the agency’s yearly summer school. The guidelines finally became ‘an export hit’. ‘In this way’, the BfR argued on the occasion of the publication of its guidance document, ‘risk assessments can be internationally harmonised in the medium term and duplication of work can be avoided in many institutions in Europe and throughout the world’ (BfR 2011).

Discussion and conclusion

I have shown how food safety agencies, in their attempt to build and cultivate political and epistemic authority in terms of a specific way of knowing and governing risks, produce and circulate guidance documents. Guidance documents allow

them to select, order and homogenise heterogeneous conceptional elements of discourses on risk governance that previously had become salient and contested in the wake of the BSE crisis and other public controversies, such as on GM foods. By doing so, they transform contested and still in flux meanings of food risks in 'tamed' and 'immutable' documentary representations. As we have seen, the guidance documents are the final result of a chain of small and careful displacements, transforming what were once challenged and contested assumptions over the nature and scope of valid and relevant knowledge on food risk into apparently uncontested ways of knowing food risks. Focusing on the commonalities between the two cases under study, we can observe how guidance documents work on moving more open, inclusive and comprehensive ways of knowing risks into rather conventional scientific ways. In this sense, they work to 'close down' what counts as legitimate representation of knowing food risks (Stirling 2003).

However, documents or rather, as in the case presented here, 'sets of documents' gain authority only inasmuch as they are recognised by their readership as valid and relevant to the problem at hand. Against this backdrop, we have been able to observe how both agencies deliberately attempted to mould a forceful textual structure and terminology that would argue their case to a critical reader. An important way these agencies chose to do this was to enrol different actors by redefining their interests and by signposting passageways and routes to follow. Moreover, cross-referencing between different sets of documents was deployed to enhance the power of the agencies' guidance documents. It is in terms of the modalities of actor enrolment and cross-referencing, in particular, that the remarkable differences between the two cases become visible.

Focusing on the differences between the two cases, we saw two almost opposing strategies of translation, which could be termed a strategy of 'local universalisation' (UK) versus a strategy of 'universal universalisation' (Germany). The strategy of 'local universalisation' is about authorising ways of knowledge production with a strong emphasis on accountability to domestic stakeholders. Knowledge production here is structured in a way that puts an emphasis on public scrutiny. The BfR, by contrast, pursues quite a different strategy, predominantly based on translating context-specific ways of knowledge production as universal standards and emphasising the very detailed standards of knowledge production and communication as a proof of scientific validity and objectivity. While the FSA tailors its many governance documents to fit into Whitehall's system of cross-departmental meta-guidelines, the BfR's guidance document is designed to travel as a set of sound scientific standards through the transnational and especially EU-level networks of risk assessment experts who work on the international harmonisation of risk analysis procedures.

Hence, translation practices are deeply embedded in what Sheila Jasanoff (2005) terms 'civic epistemologies' (see also Straßheim and Korinek 2016). The FSA's strategy of openness to public scrutiny seems to fit perfectly with what Jasanoff (2005) calls the UK's 'communitarian civic epistemology', which is linked to what Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) call the British political 'public interest' culture. In the UK, the government is regarded as a 'necessary evil, whose

powers are to be no more than are absolutely necessary, and whose ministers and officials must constantly be held to public account' (Stillman 1991). Accordingly, regulatory science must also allow the public to 'witness' both its scientific objectivity *and* political legitimacy. In the German *Rechtsstaat*, by contrast, with its strong and all-encompassing body of public laws governing every administrative sphere, the accountability of public servants is ensured through constitutionally and legally mandated rules under which they carry out their functions. Accordingly, once the rules for a German advisory body have been formally set in place, regulatory science is carried out in a relatively 'invisible sphere of expert decision-making', as Jasanoff puts it, which seems to resemble the BfR's strategy of universalisation by drawing up legal-scientific standards backstage.

Summing up, treating documents as means of translation enables us to study authority generating processes as a result of intra- and intertextual assemblages of actors, materials and discursive references as well as their contextual embeddedness (Freeman and Maybin 2011; Simons 2016). From my perspective, this is one of the most important advantages we gain from a perspective of translation: instead of treating policy documents as carriers of disembodied sayings of actors (as is still often done in political science), seeing documents as translation necessitates that we look at the embodied everyday practices of actors who use documents as physical objects to better understand broader phenomena of power and culture, continuity and change and of the local and the universal (Freeman 2009).

Notes

- 1 This also follows the institutional design of the EU-level food safety governance, where since 2002 risk assessment has been carried out by the independent European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).
- 2 This research was based on a project 'Studying the Changing Orders of Political Expertise (SCOPE), carried out from 2011 to 2014 at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center in cooperation with Humboldt University (funded by the Volkswagen Foundation).
- 3 Note the plural used here, suggesting (or at least enabling) an understanding of consumers as a collective actor.
- 4 'Public health', particularly in the tradition of (Old) Labour, usually emphasised 'social factors of health risks', such as inequality, poverty and education, rather than individual behaviours and risk factors.

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12 Conclusion

Power, relationality and difference

Tobias Berger and Alejandro Esguerra

On 15 February 2003, something quite unprecedented happened: millions of people all around the world took to the streets in a form of globally coordinated protest to stop a war that had not yet started. In the analysis of Sidney Tarrow, it was ‘the largest example of collective action in history’ (Tarrow 2010, vii). Testimonials of protest abound. Rahul Rao – for example – movingly remembers how in London

[t]here was something marvellously appropriate about chanting ‘no more wars for oil’ as we marched between Whitehall’s impassive public buildings, visible testaments to an empire built on Indian indigo and Cairo cotton, on Ghanaian gold and Malayan rubber, on weavers’ thumbs and opium wars.
(Rao 2010, 1)

Anger at the eagerness of the Bush and Blair administrations to start a war in Iraq quickly combined with myriad local concerns. Yet what, in addition to these specific concerns, brought people to the streets of London as well as Amsterdam, Beirut, Berlin, Brussels, Calcutta, Damascus, Dhaka, Johannesburg, New York, Taipei, Tel Aviv and approximately 600 other cities (Walgrave and Rucht 2010, xiii) was the potential use of tiny particles (such as bacteria, viruses or toxins) and the potentially violent reaction by the Western militaries that the potential use of such particles might provoke.

Ten days earlier, Colin Powell – then-US Secretary of State – had appeared before the United Nations (UN) Security Council. It was a sequel to multiple meetings that had taken place over the previous two years. In these meetings, Hans Blix, Mohammed ElBaradai and Colin Powell had presented their alternative interpretations of evidence available on the aforementioned particles. The seemingly simple question concerned whether these particles could be aligned to a specific object, namely weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The answers to this question were overtly technical; and probably had to be so (Miller 2007, 336). Nuclear, biological and chemical technologies are ambivalent in the sense that they can be used for both peaceful and military means. Alexandros Tokhi cites the example of Albert Einstein and Leó Szilárd, who ‘intended to develop a new refrigeration system by pumping liquid metals through tubes with

the help of electromagnetic fields' (Tokhi 2013, 24). Although it had no commercial success, their invention reappeared in the US programme to develop the first nuclear bomb a few years later. This dual use dilemma is also at the centre of contemporary global cooperation, which intends to prevent the weaponisation of nuclear energy as well as biological and technical industries through the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. These treaties aim to separate the civilian use of nuclear, biological and chemical technologies and their military potentials (Tokhi 2013).

What happened on 5 February 2003 was thus an act of translation. When Colin Powell mobilised audiotapes and satellite images – which he tossed on the wooden desk of the UN Security Council to proclaim that '[w]e know that Saddam Hussein is determined to keep his weapons of mass destruction; he's determined to make more'¹ – he not only engaged in an impressive performance that attracted sufficient media attention in the US to allow the government that he was representing to get the invasion of Iraq underway (Miller 2007, 336); moreover, he also created the very object for which the international inspectors had been looking. By mobilising various artefacts related to different information, he – at least temporarily – succeeded in representing WMD that seemingly existed in Iraq in the Security Council. Of course, this representation's success was only temporary, at best. Many people never believed it and most of those who did had to revisit their beliefs, at the very latest after the publication of the Chilcot Report, which concluded that 'the judgements about the severity of the threat posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction – WMD – were presented with a certainty that was not justified'.² Precisely because this translation was not very convincing in the long run, it serves to highlight three essential points.

First, the taken-for-granted objects of world politics are significantly more fragile than most scholarship assumes. Neo-realists, for example, pursue a kind of materialism that takes the existence of weapons – and especially very powerful ones – at face value. What the example above shows is how these objects do not self-evidently exist in the world; rather, they literally need to be brought into being in a number of complex – and often rather unstable – acts of representation. Naturally, this is not to deny the existence of weapons as material objects: in fact, we contend that material objects hold decisive importance. Nonetheless, in order to become political objects that can be known and contested in fora like the UN Security Council, they require some kind of representational work that turns material objects into potential weapons. Powell tried to do just that, using material objects (like the satellite images) that depicted further material objects to establish the potential existence of WMD in Iraq as a legitimate cause for intervention. It is these acts of representation that both constitute objects and allow them to travel.

Second, as they travel, these objects create new relations, which unfold between human and non-human entities alike. Take the representation of WMD as one object in the making as an example. WMD existed neither in Iraq (materially) nor in the UN Security Council (figuratively). In order to make them appear,

Colin Powell needed tape recorders that transported Arabic statements to New York and satellite images that facilitated a bird's-eye perspective on Iraq.

Third, as they travel, objects not only forge new relations, but they also produce difference. As the representation of WMD in the Security Council travelled outside the solemn conference rooms and beyond New York's 42nd Street, they developed a life of their own, becoming further translated into pro-invasion advocacy as well as anti-invasion protests. The protests subsequently further intermingled WMD in Iraq (or their absence) with the other local issues.

These three points are central to our understanding of world politics in translation, representing the short-hand answers to three questions that we posed in the introductory chapter:

- 1 How do objects move?
- 2 What do they do while moving?
- 3 What happens to them as they move from one place to another?

In what follows, we conceptualise power, relationality and difference as answers to these questions. Making objects move requires power and – more specifically – the power to represent objects in different places. As objects move, they bind people, materials and things together. Therefore, relationality is a key outcome of translational processes, as is the production of difference that occurs as objects move from one place to another. Power, relationality and difference are constitutive features of translations. Empirically, they are intricately intertwined and occur simultaneously. Nonetheless, in the remainder of this chapter, we contend that they can be analytically separated to gain a better understanding of what we can observe as we approach world politics through a translational approach. In the following three sections, we summarise what the individual contributions to this volume have observed in terms of power, relationality and difference as they investigated world politics in translation. After having conceptualised 'translation' through its constitutive features, we conclude by highlighting the ontological, epistemological and methodological implications of a translational approach on contemporary world politics. Ontologically, a translation perspective simultaneously highlights the importance of previously neglected material objects as well as their fluidity. Epistemologically, it challenges the spatial imagination of International Relations (IR) (as a discipline) by moving from established notions of level ('the international', 'the national', 'the local') to sites of translation. Methodologically, the analysis of translations thus always needs to start on the ground and proceed by following the micro-moves of the various people and things that become linked in translation.

Power

How do objects move? The chapters in this volume have emphasised the importance of *translational power* when dealing with this question. Making objects move requires their transformation into an entity that can be transferred from a

specific context or a social situation from which it emerged to a variety of global political contexts (Clarke et al. 2015). This process of transforming an entity into another is a translational act of creating representations, i.e. of selecting, isolating, remaking and fixing. Representations can subsequently make objects present again in a new context. How does this work in practice?

Bruno Latour (1999) followed an interdisciplinary team of scientists in the Amazon, examining their scientific practices of evaluating the quality of a forest. Latour does not rush through the details of scientific work but rather allows the reader to experience all of the intermediate steps, the set of epistemic practices and the various instruments that are necessary to turn soil samples of a piece of the Amazonian forest into a final report. These acts of translation are conscious choices of what and how to translate. Speaking for others involves choosing between alternatives, not only between good and bad alternatives but rather between various interpretations that could be represented otherwise. This is a deeply political process and indeed an act of power. As Michel Callon notes in his seminal study on the revitalisation of scallops in Brest, France: 'But to translate is also to express in one's own language what others say and want, why they act in the way they do and how they associate with each other: it is to establish oneself as a spokesperson' (Callon 1986, 81).

Thus, translational power comprises two operations. First, it signifies the power to form heterogeneous networks of former dispersed entities (various human and non-human actors). As elaborated in the introduction, it is the power to connect chemicals in Iraq to international norms and high-level bureaucrats. In this account, power does not radiate out from a fixed centre; rather, it is located in the heterogeneous assemblages and networks (Best and Walters 2013a, 333). It is relational and not possessed by an actor. Second, representing this assemblage of human and non-human actors is the genuine expression of power. Scholars of translation have developed a sensitivity for issues of representation – be it nature, a position, a class or race – and the inherent power struggles that come with doing representations.³ In short, we argue that translational power is a relational concept examining the abilities of actors to (i) create durable relations between previously unconnected entities and (ii) represent this very assemblage.

Our concept of translational power resonates with IR notions of 'productive power'. As Barnett and Duvall explain, 'to attend to the analysis of productive power is to focus on how diffuse and contingent social processes produce particular kinds of subjects, fix meaning and categories, and create what is taken for granted and the ordinary of world politics' (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 56). The chapters in this volume attend to the production, change and fixing of meaning as a form of doing representation. For instance, in Chapter 3 Holger Stritzel examines the travelling concept of 'organised crime'. Drawing on securitisation as well as translation theory, he shows how the concept has emerged from being an issue of little concern to being considered a key security threat facing states and societies worldwide. Translational power comes into play since the concept of organised crime allows assembling security measures that were not previously possible.

In contrast to the rather discursive notion of Barnett and Duvall's productive power, the authors of this volume often take a microscopic view following actors in doing translations. In Chapter 6 Sebastian Schindler asks why the UN is often depicted as a world organisation pulled apart by the egoistic desires and manipulations of numerous individual and collective actors. Schindler turns this picture of the UN into an object of study. What are the facts that lead prominent scholars to conclude that the UN should be understood as a field of self-interested struggles? To tackle this question, he argues that we need to examine how specific facts are selected, isolated and publicised. Accordingly, his starting point is a specific story about the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that appears in a well-received book on the problems of the UN by Thomas Weiss (2008). Thus, facts in Schindler's account are not given but rather are actively constructed through epistemic practices. The choice and ethics of these practices have important effects since they give shape to a specific vision or representation of the world rather than another. Examining how Thomas Weiss creates a certain picture of the UN involves analysing the translational power that he performs by selecting some facts over others, as well as by believing allegations rather than questioning them. These practices are not innocent: in fact, the making of knowledge and the production of categorical distinctions have performative effects (Esguerra, Beck and Lidskog 2017). They create order rather than simply mirroring it, thus affecting the trust that we place in the international institutions built to govern world politics.

Schindler's chapter is indicative of the value added of a translational concept of power since it points to the previously ignored places where power operates. We argue that translational power operates in the construction of problems and objects on the level of micro interactions and practices (Knorr Cetina 2008; Solomon and Steele 2017). Nonetheless, much of the IR literature leaves these places in the dark, failing to investigate the origin of the problems and objects that it seeks to tackle (Allan 2017). To give an example: while there is extensive literature on the cultural variation of risk politics, there is little research on how local risk governance knowledge gains authority. Thus, Chapter 11 makes a distinct contribution to the debate. Rebecca-Lea Korinek examines food safety agencies in Germany and the UK, zooming in on how in their different ways they produce and circulate 'guidance documents' regulating their risk assessment practices. She shows how these documents become a key instrument in establishing a certain understanding of risk within an institution and thus contribute to the authority of institutions in which we trust.

Similarly to Korinek's focus on documents, in Chapter 5 Katrin Seidel creates an awareness not only of the places where power operates but also of the political tools that embody power relations. These tools brought in by international donors regulate South Sudan's constitution-making in a way that reduces the chances of integrating diverse ideas on statehood for a highly-segmented society. She shows how in this segmented society dominant local actors utilise the internationalised constitution-making tools to secure their own interests and positions. In other words, with the concept of translational power, we see how international donors

aim to represent their constitutional visions. Nonetheless, despite their ready-made political tools, they fail to fully engage interest groups and bind them to a single representation of a constitution. While depending on the agency of various actors to create South Sudan's constitution-making, this agency is 'truculent, recalcitrant, crafty, and self-interested'; thus, in translation, 'things never unfold quite as planned' (Best and Walters 2013a, 333). Conventional concepts of power encounter difficulties in explaining the uncontrollability of these processes: they essentially understand power as 'power over' operationalised as the capacity of actors over resources. By contrast, the concept of translational power is relational, prompting the researcher to investigate how actors achieve consolidated yet never fully stable relations between different entities, as well as how they make these relations present.

Relationality

What do objects do as they move? It is a crucial insight of translation theories that objects in translation connect previously separated contexts or reconfigure established networks. Investigating the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Susanne Zwingel (2016) argues that the convention 'stitches together' the idea of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women with the world's grown norms and traditions. For her, the 'connecting activism is foundational for a global justice project' to be realised (Zwingel 2016, 2).

We capture processes of 'stitching together' with the notion of relationality as developed in Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and Science and Technology Studies (STS) more broadly. Scholars in this tradition argue that through translation entities are held together and enter into a relationship with each other. It is unique in this context that STS brings to IR a commitment to the symmetry of actors, whereby relations may exist between all kinds of entities, humans and non-humans alike (Chapter 2 this volume). This notion of symmetry is most clearly evident in Michel Callon's (1986) seminal article, which we cited when discussing power. Callon investigates the collaboration of the scallops, the fishermen, engaged researchers and the scientific community. By following the principle of symmetry, non-humans (the scallops) as well as a number of instruments, devices or technical artefacts, etc., are part of Callon's analysis, creating an actor network. Thus, conducting translational research involves investigating how and with which objects relations are created.

As Endre Dányi highlights in Chapter 2, there have been considerable recent efforts to make a case for STS and ANT's usefulness in studying politics, especially regarding the conditions of public participation (Marres 2012; Chilvers and Kearnes 2016), or the basic terms and categories of IR (Barry 2013; Best and Walters 2013a). This emergent body of work investigates the myriad ways in which matter matters. It thereby contributes to recent debates about 'new materialisms' in IR (Srnicek, Fotou and Arghand 2013; Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams 2015), which – in the words of Diana Coole – 'recognize agency as being

distributed across a far greater range of entities and processes than had formerly been imagined' (Coole 2013, 457). These new materialisms in IR have thus focused on what was long considered to be immaterial aspects of world politics, such as knowledge about global phenomena. Asking where such knowledge comes from, Christian Bueger (2015) – for example – has turned to the analysis of those 'epistemic infrastructures' through which knowledge about piracy as a phenomenon of global political relevance is produced and enacted (Bueger 2015; see also Knorr Cetina 2008). Central to the infrastructures are not only experts, scholars and diplomats, but also documents. It is the circulation of these documents that links dispersed actors together; for example, in the case of the International Maritime Organization, which produces reports that emerge out of long translation chains, connecting 'piratical activity, ship masters, ship owners, flag states, and other reporting centers' (Bueger 2015, 10). The circulation of documents links not only pirates and diplomats, but also villagers in Bangladesh and bureaucrats in Brussels in the context of development interventions (Berger 2017b), non-governmental and state representatives on the floors of international summits (Riles 2006), as well as academics, activists and government officials in climate policy and the EU's Emission Trade System (Simons 2016).

Documents are just one of many material artefacts to and through which relations between different actors are forged in the processes of translation. A translational approach thus zooms in on these material infrastructures that are part and parcel of specific ways of knowing about global phenomena and thus also forge collective realities. As Jan-Peter Voss and Richard Freeman (2016) have argued, forging such collective realities in translation happens not only by convincing people through arguments, but also through

building material infrastructures such as communication systems, buildings, and transport networks, and in the circulation of material artefacts that afford particular ways of doing politics, such as megaphones, ballots, voting machines, reporting forms, and documents with data, indicators, and benchmarks.

(Voss and Freeman 2016, 18)

Focusing on the intricate ways in which the human and the non-human become entangled in processes of translations as well as the new relations that are forged in these processes consequently requires great attention to detail, exploring previously neglected places and largely forgotten objects that start revealing their surprising powers when approached through the lens of translation. This lens is best used to scrutinise microscopic contexts where relationality is forged. A translational approach to world politics is thus both part of and enriches broader trends in IR to pay greater attention to the micro-foundations of the phenomena that we seek to study. These recent 'micro-moves' in IR have started to '(re)discover the lives and people of global politics, and to breathe life back into a field that grand theory mostly neglected' (Solomon and Steele 2017, 2).

The desire to breathe life back into grand theory has coincided with a greater appreciation of ethnographic methods in IR (Neumann 2010; Vrasti 2008).

Despite never being entirely absent from the discipline – as early feminist scholarship attests (Cohn 1987; Enloe 1989) – there is currently growing literature on the ethnography of international organisations (Niezen and Sapignoli 2017), diplomacy (Neumann 2012) and the politics of international development (Mosse 2013). Nonetheless, ethnographic research produces its own kinds of relationality; for example, between the researcher and his/her interlocutors. The ethical dimensions of this relationality as it emerges in the ethnographic exploration of translations in world politics are discussed in Chapter 7 by Farhad Mukhtarov. Reflecting on his own ethnographic research on the translation of water policies in southeastern Turkey, Mukhtarov discusses the ethical and political dilemmas pertaining to ethnographic research on processes of policy translation. These include the danger of becoming entangled in a web of relationships with powerful actors and the potentially ensuing self-censorship to report on them, the need to compromise initial research designs to obtain access to data and the difficulty in balancing the roles of researcher, advocate and confidante. To address these challenges and dilemmas, Mukhtarov proposes various strategies evolving around the reflexivity, positionality and normativity of the researcher.

The self-reflexivity of researchers – including the critical awareness of one's own positionality as well as normative presuppositions and at times only tacit aspirations – is naturally not limited to translation research. Translation research is particularly well-equipped to bring the thorny ethical and political issues discussed by Mukhtarov into focus. At least in its STS variant, translation research starts from the insight that science and technology are – in Bruno Latour's felicitous phrase – 'politics by other means' (Latour 1983). As Voss and Freeman argue, this

is not a politics that works through the articulation and negotiation of public values or the 'common good', mediated by institutions such as democracy and the nation state, but one that works through the construction of phenomena and functions, prototypes, and evidence, and is mediated by the institutions of science, its methods, and its laboratories.

(Voss and Freeman 2016, 9–10)

Accordingly, a translation perspective forces us to take a step back and ask how our most basic assumptions, the utterly familiar forms of organising ourselves and the most quotidian instruments that we use on a daily basis mainly without thought actually come into the worlds that we inhabit. One such basic building block – at least for policy-makers, administrators and scholars – is 'the project'. Exploring aspects of the mental health work undertaken by the European Commission in collaboration with the World Health Organization in Europe, in Chapter 8 Richard Freeman shows how the organisational form of the project 'mobilises people, materials and organisations, but it mobilises them *in relation to each other*' (p. 148). Nonetheless, this relationality is always fragile and precarious, escaping linear teleologies of government or planning. Instead, approaching 'the

European project' as it unfolds through its countless projects on the ground highlights the unpredictability of what happens when different people and things are brought into relation with each other.

For us, relationality might thus emerge in two movements. The first movement is *from many to one*. This movement refers to processes of (seeming) consensualisation as we have already described them above; for example, when different people, materials and things are mobilised in a way that produces the kind of knowledge about piracy that becomes eligible within existing structures of global governance like the UN's Security Council. Nonetheless, piracy is just one of many objects that does not simply exist in the world but rather requires continuous work and indeed power to become stabilised, if only temporarily. There is an emerging literature in IR dealing with the mechanisms and processes whereby objects become constituted, as well as the ways in which actors progressively characterise – and thereby stabilise – objects like 'the climate' or 'forests' (Allan 2017; Esguerra 2014). Negotiations pertaining to the protection of the natural environment thus always implicitly beg the question of what it actually is that needs protecting (or not). Such negotiations are sites of intense translation, as Katharina Glaab shows in Chapter 10. Glaab investigates how faith-based actors translate their knowledge within the 'secularised' space of global climate change negotiations.

The second movement runs in the opposite direction, namely *from one to many*. This movement has been most thoroughly theorised by the literature on the diffusion, localisation and translation of transnational norms (which we will discuss in greater detail in the next section). Here, the expectation is that travelling norms undergo significant transformations as they move from one place to another. Nonetheless, as they move they also connect these spaces. Even though travelling norms are transformed, relations are simultaneously forged. In this section, we have focused on these relations as an answer to the question of what objects do. They mobilise people, materials and things in relation to each other. These relations are the outcome of complex processes of translation; and a translational approach redirects our focus to these processes in which objects are constituted. The next section focuses less on what objects do and more on what happens to them as they move from one place to another.

Difference

Finally, we ask what happens to these objects when they travel from one place to another. While forging new relations, objects in translation also produce difference. Within IR, this point has been most clearly articulated by scholars investigating the translation of specific norms as they move from the global to the local and vice versa. In his classic treatment of the influence of transnational norms on regionalism in Asia, Amitav Acharya has shown how 'local actors accept foreign ideas in accordance with their "cognitive priors" or existing beliefs and conduct' (Acharya 2009, 144). The attested importance of local actors in shaping the outcomes of transnational norm promotion has been further confirmed in a

number of subsequent investigations. Sally Merry and Susanne Zwingel have documented how women's rights have been translated differently in different contexts, including local community centres in Hawai'i, Delhi, Beijing, Fiji and Hong Kong as much as international conference floors in New York and Geneva (Merry 2006; Zwingel 2016).

Norm translations thus unfold in a recursive back-and-forth movement between what IR scholars term as the global and the local. These processes of translation leave neither the content of norms nor the social and political practices of the place in which they are translated untouched. In fact, translations thus produce two kinds of difference, as Tobias Berger has shown in his analysis of the translation of transnational norms in the context of non-state courts in rural Bangladesh. Focusing on donor-sponsored interventions in these courts, Berger shows how grass-roots level fieldworkers succeed in supporting the empowerment of poor and marginalised people and thereby alter the existing power dynamics in rural Bangladesh. However, they only do so because they also change transnational norms by translating them in ways that resonate within the social and political world that they inhabit (Berger 2017a).

While there is growing interest in such norm translations within IR, processes of translation and their correlative production of difference have only received scant attention when it comes to other travelling objects. For example, Arlena S. Liggins and Uli Beisel analyse the translation of medical technology in Chapter 4. Focusing on the uses of glucometers in Uganda, they show how medical technology is translated against the backdrop of severe global inequalities. Designed as a self-testing device for diabetes patients in the Global North, glucometers easily become the only chance and possibility to detect and diagnose diabetes, especially in governmental health care facilities. Nonetheless, when used as a self-testing device, the glucometer ceases to make patients' lives easier. The authors found that

by talking to some of these patients, you may wonder whether their life is actually made easier by using the glucometer, at times the opposite is the case as now they 'have to worry about another thing' by taking care of a medical instrument, which requires expensive supplies frequently.

(Chapter 4, this volume, p. 69)

In translation, a gap thus opens between the intended use of an instrument and its tangible effects elsewhere. This gap also becomes visible in Chapter 5 in Katrin Seidel's analysis of the international rule of law instruments that – quite literally – become instrumentalised by governing elites in South Sudan to enhance their power rather than constraining it. However, importantly, the normative evaluation of such translations remains an open question. As Endre Dányi has shown in Chapter 2, this volume, every translation unavoidably implies an act of treason,

[b]y drawing up new contexts, making new juxtapositions and assigning new meanings, equivalence is necessarily rendered impossible. [But] the strength

of ANT in studying politics lies not in the avoidance of bad translation, but in the ongoing exploration of what may count as good treason.

(p. 35)

The exploration of bad translations and good treasons points to a central element in the study of translation. Every translation unavoidably oscillates in a productive tension of continuity and change. While continuously producing difference, it is a key characteristic of translations that they also perpetually raise claims to similarity. Take literary translations as an example: when translated from Bengali into English, a poem by Rabindranath Tagore cannot be translated word by word. Such a translation would probably be utterly meaningless. At the same time, recreating the meaning of Tagore's poem in English also cannot be entirely arbitrary. Instead, any translation needs to claim at least some degree of fidelity to the object – whether literary text, legal instrument or glucometer – that is being translated. This raises the thorny question of the original that is being translated. As we have argued in the introduction, translation research across various disciplines has greatly complicated the notion of an original that would self-evidently exist in the world, waiting to be translated by skilled translators. Rather than simply copying originals and sagely transferring their meaning from one language to another or one place to the next, translations produce new originals. This intensely creative element of any translation has been most eloquently captured by Walter Benjamin in his reflections on the 'Task of the Translator' (1996). Drawing inspiration from Benjamin's essay, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing has argued that 'in this sense of the term translation, there are no originals, but only a heterogeneous continuum of translations, a continual process of rewriting in which meaning – as well as claims of originality and purity – are made' (Tsing 1997, 253). A translation's perspective thus rejects the self-evident nature of concepts, facts or instruments; instead, it interrogates the power-laden processes in which these objects are constituted as seemingly natural originals and quotidian facts of everyday life.

It is in this seeming naturalness that a second dimension of the complex relationship between translation and difference surfaces, namely the denial of difference. Paradoxically, the production and the denial of difference in processes of translation are closely linked. Although translation produces difference, this difference is frequently denied and often even eradicated. In Chapter 6, the repeated translation of facts about Edouard Saouma eventually resulted in a rather monolithic representation of the international organisations that leaves hardly any room for alternative readings of what is – and is not – wrong with the UN and its associated agencies. Similar processes of denying difference as the outcome of translations are also analysed by Noemi Lendvai-Bainton in Chapter 9. Critically interrogating the shifts of meaning that occur as Hungarian policy discourses are translated into 'EU English', Lendvai-Bainton shows how competing notions of social inclusion in processes of translation are streamlined and ultimately reduced to narrow neoliberal notions of both 'the social' and 'inclusion'. What emerges from these processes of translation is not a multiplicity

of European notions of 'social inclusion' but rather a uniform language that is constructed in particular ways to promote and sustain the European integration project based on highly technicalised, non-politicised, evidence-based policy language that assumes consensus and collaboration.

In sum, we have argued that the translation perspective sheds light on the ways in which (a) political objects are constituted and the representational power necessary for such constitutions, (b) the new relations that objects forge both in the process of their constitution and as they move from one place to another, and (c) the transformation that these objects undergo as they are translated differently by different actors in different places.

Frictions and futures: making translation(s) present in International Relations

This book has been a collective journey. It has involved multiple scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds, including Politics and IR, Policy Studies, Medical and Legal Anthropology as well as STS. As argued at the outset of this volume, all these disciplines carry their own understanding of what translation is. However, theories and concepts do not travel safely between different disciplines but undergo their own myriad transformations. This volume, then, has sought to translate 'translation' further into the disciplinary world of world politics and IR. It has not aimed at staying faithful to competing notions of translation as they have been advanced by different disciplinary conventions. Instead, we have looked for what Endre Dányi has so aptly called 'good treason'. Our treacherous readings of 'translation' bear three distinct implications for IR: first, there is an ontological implication, which we exemplify by attending to objects as processes and in their materiality; second, there is an epistemological implication, which we discuss with reference to the shift from levels to sites; and, finally, there is a methodological implication marked by the event of micro-practices. These implications challenge IR as it is currently practised.

First, *objects as process and in their materiality*: as elaborated in the introduction of this volume we contribute to IR research by placing objects at the centre of inquiry. While most IR scholarship orders objects along the question of what to govern (the climate, terrorism, public health), we add to this those objects which are concerned with the doing of politics (Allan 2017; Voß and Freeman 2016). By this we mean the instruments, projects or concepts through which the policy issues mentioned above are structured and governed. We argue that objects of IR are more fluid than conventionally assumed. The fluidity of objects refers to their ontological status as constantly being in process. This understanding is in line with an emergent insight in IR norm research. Mona Krook and Jacqui True (2012) find that norms continue to evolve after they emerge, whereby they conceptualise norms as a process calling attention to both 'internal' and 'external' sources of dynamism. Similarly, Antje Wiener (2014) argues that norms are contested and their content is subject to ongoing reinterpretation. Broadly speaking, the chapters of this volume investigate objects as 'objects in becoming',

whether facts about the UN (Chapter 6) or the authority of food safety (Chapter 11). In addition to the fluidity of objects, the chapters have highlighted the very materiality of objects in translation adding to recent debates about ‘new materialisms’ in IR (Srnicek et al. 2013).

Second, *from levels to sites*: in most of its explanatory frameworks, IR scholarship has remained vested in a spatial imagination that distinguishes between neatly separated levels of analysis. While scholars have pointed to the important interactions between these levels (Risse 2016), the epistemological status of these levels themselves has hardly been called into question. In contrast, theorists of translation draw on the practice-theoretical vocabulary of sites rather than levels (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina and von Savigny 2001). The notion of sites flattens the hierarchal structure that exists between the international, the national or domestic, and the local. Sites or different contexts – whether the conference rooms of the UN (see Chapter 10) or the streets of Lisbon (see Chapter 2) – are connected through norms, facts or other objects in translation defined by power, relationality and difference. Thus, the chapters in this volume do not a priori think of one context as more powerful or weaker than another; instead, they ask how certain spaces become to be seen as ‘global’ while others are characterised as invariably ‘local’, what is at stake in these characterisations and how they have been produced in the first place.

Third, *the event of micro-practices*: translations always unfold between different actors located in (or coming from) different contexts. Investigating translations therefore requires cautious attention to the micro-processes in which these translations unfold. Methodologically, most chapters in this volume deploy ethnographic methods to follow their objects in translation. This covers the entire spectrum of ethnography: Sebastian Schindler tracing the story of what is wrong with the UN draws partly on historical ethnography, while Katrin Seidel spent prolonged periods in South Sudan conducting classic ethnographic fieldwork. Translation research is thus a driving force in the recent trend towards the micro in explain-ing IR (Kertzer 2017; Solomon and Steele 2017) while also adding to the renewed interest in ethnographic methods within the discipline (Vrasti 2008). This methodological choice is necessary to encounter the differences and frictions that translations produce.

In translations, as we have argued throughout this volume, ‘nothing stays the same’ (Best and Walters 2013b, 346). This holds for international norms as much as for scientific concepts (see Chapter 2) and the researchers that produce them. This book has sought to document some of these transformations that occur as ‘translation’ is translated in IR. These translations have started on the ground, in the messy complexities of global politics; and it is from these grounds that we have started to theorise world politics in translation. The theoretical points we have offered – on power, on relationality and on difference – contribute to ongoing research in IR: they offer novel insights into how norms and ideas change as they travel between different sites, how institutions emerge and are reproduced and how objects of world politics are known. In these diverse strands of scholarship research on world politics in translation is just beginning.

Notes

- 1 Quoted in *The Guardian* 5 February 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/05/iraq.usa2>, last accessed 15 March 2017.
- 2 www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/the-report, last accessed 15 March 2017.
- 3 For a critical reflection on how STS and postcolonial studies may inform each other, see Harding (2011). On representation in STS, see Lynch and Woolgar (1990).

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