1 Introduction: The objects of translation

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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 uncontestable 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 postcolonial 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 Chakarabarty 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 translation[1] 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 necessitates – 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 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 Stritzel concentrates on the journey of the concept of 'organized crime' across time and space in Chapter 3. Stritzel 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-governemtal 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 conceptional 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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