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# 9

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Gabriel González Núñez

## 9.1   Understanding Public Policy

The way in which people live has evolved over time, and, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, change has come about in an increasingly rapid manner, affecting everything from how we produce our goods to what we eat. Two characteristics of this acceleration in the rate of change are particularly relevant for the topic of this chapter. One is that individuals crowd together more than before. Because we live longer and healthier lives, population density increases, and as cities become hubs for resources, they grow exponentially. By 2050, it is estimated that 68 per cent of the world's population will live in urban areas, and by then the world is expected to have at least forty-three megacities – cities whose population exceeds 10 million inhabitants (UN Population Division, 2018, p. 2). The other characteristic is that mobility is much more robust than before. As the technical means to move quickly across great distances become available, people tend more frequently to move away from the places where they were born. As worldwide poverty decreases, obtaining access to such means of transportation allows for constant intra- and international migration. In 2017, the worldwide number of international migrants reached an estimated 258 million (UN Population Division, 2017, p. 1).

In that context, the need to organize public spaces is readily apparent. If increasingly densely populated societies are to avoid descending into anarchy, they must resolve basic questions such as: How do we get water and similar vital necessities to everyone? What is the best way to promote basic skills in the population? What happens when an individual becomes ill? How do we manage life-threatening emergencies? Importantly in terms of this chapter: How do we communicate? Dealing with these issues requires the work of many agents. Indeed, the challenges of organizing public spaces make co-ordinated action a necessity,

and, in modern societies, this co-ordinated action is deployed through policy – more specifically, through public policy. In other words, the modern body politic utilizes public policy as the instrument through which it organizes itself.

The concept of public policy has been identified in several ways. Perhaps the simplest understanding is that '[p]ublic policy is whatever governments choose to do or not do' (Dye, 2002, p. 1). This includes obvious actions, such as levying taxes and organizing bureaucracies, but it also includes, for example, distributing benefits and regulating behaviour (Dye, 2002, p. 1). A more nuanced definition sees public policy as 'an officially expressed intention backed by a sanction, which can be a reward or a punishment' (Lowi et al., 2017, p. 612). Such officially expressed intentions take the form of laws, rules, orders and so on (Lowi et al., 2017, p. 612). Well-known types of public policy include economic policy, education policy, foreign policy, health-care policy and social policy. Public policy can also encompass cultural policy, language policy and translation policy. This last type of policy has, not surprisingly, garnered the attention of scholars in the field of translation studies, as will be shown in this chapter.

Studying any kind of public policy means approaching an extremely complex object. Its complexity stems from the high number of actors involved, the very lengthy process its development requires, the battles often fought over sometimes very technical issues, and the not-always-civil debates that arise over the issues at stake (Sabatier, 2007, pp. 3–4). Owing to its complexity, scholars often rely on models, or simplified understandings, of policy. At this point one might remember that 'all models are wrong, but some are useful' (Box and Draper, 1989, p. 424). In other words, these models are tools for understanding some aspect of public policy in a useful way through simplification of reality, and they may be informed by specific theoretical perspectives. For example, policy may be understood through a Marxist or a capitalist theory. The Marxist perspective sees the decisions made by the most economically powerful social classes as the primary driver of policy, while a capitalist perspective argues that natural forces of supply and demand, if unfettered, will shape policy (Turner et al., 2018, p. 401). Whatever theory informs the model, it is helpful to bear in mind that models are not intended to provide the comprehensive 'truth' about policy. Rather, they are useful tools in thinking about the object of study.

To help think about policy generally, Thomas Dye summarizes several conceptual models: the institutional model views public policy as the output of government institutions (Dye, 2002, pp. 12–14); the process model views public policy as the result of political activity (Dye, 2002, pp. 14–16); the rational model views public policy as an effort by governments to obtain 'maximum social gain' (Dye, 2002, pp. 16–19); the

incremental model views public policy as the 'continuation of past government activities with only incremental modifications' (Dye, 2002, pp. 19–21); the group model sees public policy as the equilibrium among different groups that are in constant struggle (Dye, 2002, p. 23); the elite model sees public policy as a manifestation of 'the preferences and values of a governing elite' (Dye, 2002, pp. 23–5); the public choice model sees public policy as 'collective decision making by self-interested individuals' (Dye, 2002, pp. 25–7); and the game-theory model sees public policy as the result of rational choices made by actors in competitive, interdependent situations (Dye, 2002, pp. 27–9). There are other models, of course, that also highlight different elements of the concept of public policy, but this list serves to exemplify just how rich and varied the models can be. They all have limitations but are nonetheless useful in their own ways, as will be shown here.

A glimpse at the general policy models just mentioned reveals that the government, broadly understood, seems to be involved one way or another. This is the case because these are models of *public* policy, and the term 'public' is often used as a synonym for 'government', especially as government activity has the potential to affect most or all people in a territory. That does not mean that only a given government is capable of *having* policy. Organizations of all types can also formulate and implement their own policies. Consider the work of Stephen Caldas (2012), who has explored language policy in the domain of the family, including the raising of bilingual children. In turn, Wine Tesseur (2017) has explored translation policy in Amnesty International, an international non-governmental organization. As these two examples illustrate, any organization can make policy for itself, but only the government can make policy that aims to organize an entire territory or subsection thereof.

Thus, matters of public policy inevitably involve the government. Admittedly, the intensity of government involvement may vary, from a laissez-faire kind of approach to highly regulated methods of direct intervention. Whatever the approach may be, public policy is the attempt to manage and, ideally, fix the problems that arise in organizing highly complex societies such as those that characterize the twenty-first century. With that general understanding in mind, Section 9.2 will address the exact role that translation and interpreting can play in managing specific social problems.

## 9.2   Translation and Interpreting as a Response to Problems in Society

When dealing with public policy, the object of study is ultimately the co-ordination of action in order to respond to identified needs in society. Thus,

the study of translation in public policy is the study of whether and how translation and interpreting are deployed to deal with social problems. In this regard, research into public policy is research into problem-solving on a social scale. Anthony Pym (2002, p. 5) has argued that translation scholars should focus on 'the problems that are most important, in the sense that they concern disagreement and debate between different social groups'. Focusing on matters of translation (which in this chapter includes interpreting) and public policy amounts to focusing on precisely such 'most important' of problems.

A starting point is understanding what is meant by the term 'social needs'. In an introductory text on social welfare and public policy, Nick Manning (2011, p. 21) indicates that a 'social need' can be defined as a need that affects different social groups to varying degrees and with different distributions. For example, the need to access the justice system might be seen as a social need because it affects different groups differently. A group of Indigenous Peruvians from the jungle who speak only Aguaruna (*awajún*) and who need to access the Spanish-speaking court system have a social need. This need affects them differently than it does a group of Spanish-speaking Peruvians born and raised in Lima. The need to access the courts might be the same, but the inability of the Aguaruna speakers to communicate effectively in Spanish will affect them in a way that situates them differently than groups of Lima-based Spanish speakers.

A social need becomes a 'social problem' when society, or a segment thereof, perceives the need as a shared problem (Manning, 2011, p. 22). The fact that Aguaruna speakers are unable to access the Peruvian court system in Spanish might not be deemed a social problem until a segment of society perceives this as a problem that affects everyone. For example, if the authorities wish to put several Aguaruna speakers on trial while guaranteeing the fundamental right to a fair trial, they are faced with a problem: proceedings cannot be held in Aguaruna because the state lacks the human and material resources to do this, but if proceedings are held in Spanish, Aguaruna speakers cannot participate and are thus unfairly tried. A social problem has been identified. At this point, solutions will be proposed. In the actual trial of the Aguaruna speakers being used as an example here, the solution was to recruit and train court interpreters specifically for this trial (see Howard, de Pedro Ricoy and Andrade Ciudad, 2018, pp. 31–3).

Of course, the solutions proposed for social problems will depend a great deal on the value judgement made about the problem itself (Manning, 2011, p. 23). In Peru, speakers of indigenous languages had been put on trial before, but it was not until a high-profile case (a deadly clash between indigenous groups and the police) that '[t]he need for legislation was brought to a head' (Howard et al., 2018, p. 31). In terms of the present chapter, this begs the question of which specific social problems are to be addressed by public policies through translation and interpreting. While

value judgements are inevitably involved, some broad, basic needs can be identified. Inasmuch as democracy has slowly become consolidated as the most common political system for organizing modern states, one may begin by inquiring about the most basic needs of democratic societies. Arguably, at the core of the democratic exercise is the aspiration to function as a society through dialogue and consensus-building. As early as 1762, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) argued that free societies need to have a common language because citizens must be able to communicate with each other (Dobel, 1986, p. 654). Since then, scholars have stressed that the ability to communicate, the ability of citizens to speak with one another, is a key characteristic of a functioning democracy (e.g., Kymlicka, 2001, p. 26). While scholars do not necessarily agree that communication must necessarily take place in one language only (e.g., Réaume, 2003, p. 253), they tend to agree that communication should take place. Thus, a basic social need in a modern, democratic society is the ability of citizens to talk to each other.

Where there are needs, the potential for problems exists. A relevant observation will suffice to illustrate this: in most modern societies – particularly in light of the increasing size of cities and the ongoing rates of migration – some individuals will simply face language barriers when trying to talk to each other. In the United States, for example, more than 350 languages are spoken, and nearly 9 per cent of the population '[s]peak English less than "very well"' (see tables at US Census Bureau, 2015). The inability of some individuals to communicate effectively with the rest of the population becomes a social problem when a segment of society decides that this is something that affects the whole of society negatively. For example, if roughly 25 million residents of the United States were unable to access the laws, communicate with public authorities, and become informed of public debate, the democratic model itself would be called into question because millions would be excluded from it. In addition, a wide range of injustices would occur, ranging from unequal opportunities to lack of access to the judiciary, all of which would be problematic in a society that aims to have a vigorous democracy.

In public policy, once a social problem has been identified, solutions are proposed. In a democratic society where not everyone can communicate effectively with each other, several solutions are possible. The solution that might come to mind most easily is that everyone should speak the same language. This solution echoes the oft-quoted belief of the liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806–73) that '[a]mong a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist' (Mill, 1861, p. 289). If one assumes, as Mill does, that representative government cannot exist when people speak different languages, then in order to have a democratic society everyone must speak a single language. This understanding can lead to requirements that

individuals be monolingual in a single language or that they at least speak in a common language. As Helder de Schutter (2017, p. 20) points out, such views of language lead to proposed solutions whereby policy 'seeks to inculcate citizens with a shared language'. Such a public policy would in practice necessitate, for example, that the government establish or promote centres where individuals learn the common language.

A problem with this proposed solution is that making everyone in society speak the same language is nearly impossible in practice. It may be possible in small societies, but in large territories where the population measures tens or hundreds of millions, such a policy objective cannot be fully realized without employing coercive measures that are anathema to democratic principles. One of the reasons this is so difficult to achieve is linked to migration. As stated earlier, in the modern world, people move, including across language boundaries. This implies that some societies continually receive speakers of many languages. Faced with this reality, a number of societies have opted for policies that promote language acquisition but nonetheless provide translation and interpreting services that allow some individuals to access certain services in their own language. For example, this is the case in the United States, where the language of the federal government is English but translation and interpreting is regularly deployed by different agencies to provide access across language barriers (see González Núñez, 2017, pp. 155–8). Choices as to what, for whom, and when to translate/interpret become in themselves policy questions that are handled at different levels of government (see González Núñez, 2016b). This exemplifies translation and interpreting as a remedial, temporary measure for individuals who have not acquired the ability to communicate effectively in the language of the majority. In such situations, 'the existence of translation is [viewed as] a regrettable state of affairs only justifiable as a temporary absence of shared knowledge of a shared language' (de Schutter, 2017, p. 21).

Another basic social problem linked to language may arise when a group that can communicate in the language of the state has traditionally spoken a different language. The problem in this scenario is not that some members of society cannot speak to each other but rather that one group feels marginalized precisely because it is being made to speak the other group's language. From the onset, the proposed solution of making everyone speak the same language *is* the social problem. In this case, other types of solution may be proposed. The possible solutions are many, and, as no two societies are identical, they will vary depending on a wide range of specific circumstances. Some examples of proposed solutions include Paraguay's nominal recognition of Guarani as an official language while mostly maintaining Spanish as the language of the state and Canada's bilingual regime where individuals may communicate with the authorities in any of the two official languages, English and French. In the case of policies where the recognition of the minority language leads to bilingual

service provision, translation (and to some extent interpreting) serves as a practical tool in their implementation. When such policies are adopted, 'translation can be justified as a way of honouring the identity associated with the target language of translation' (de Schutter, 2017, p. XX).

The basic social problems that arise in terms of language are broadly described here. It is useful to bear in mind that each society has its unique language combinations, history and demographics. In some societies, problems may arise mostly in terms of new minority languages, that is, those spoken by immigrants. In other societies, problems may arise mostly in connection with old minority languages, that is, those spoken by historical minorities. In yet others, issues may revolve around both language groups or, to make matters even more complicated, the distinction between old and new minority languages may not always be easily made (see, e.g., González Núñez, 2016c, 2017). Observing this reality, Reine Meylaerts (2011) argues that language regimes in multilingual societies may be developed under four prototypical models. Such regimes are, in essence, the implementation of public policy aimed at broadly addressing social problems associated with language difference. Meylaerts proposes that these regimes are the following:

> 1) at one end of the continuum, multilingualism with obligatory multi-directional translation in all languages for all; 2) at the other end of the continuum, complete institutional monolingualism with obligatory translation into the official language and non-translation into the minority languages combined; 3) an intermediate prototype of institutional monolingualism combined with occasional (and often temporary) translation in well-defined situations, in anticipation of minorities' learning of the majority language; 4) in some specific cases, a combination of prototype one and two: institutional monolingualism at the lower level and institutional multilingualism with multidirectional mandatory translation at the superior (e.g., federal) level or vice versa. The first case applies to Belgium and Canada. The second case applies to the UK, which is largely monolingual at the central level, while e.g., Wales is bilingual.
>
> (Meylaerts, 2017, pp. 46–7)

All of these prototypical models require, in order to be sustained, the deployment of translation and interpreting. This means that translation, including interpreting, plays a role in co-ordinating action to respond to social problems where language is a component. These problems may manifest themselves differently in different situations. For example, a hospital in London may need to provide services to patients in tens of languages, while a hotline in Brownsville (on the United States border with Mexico) may get calls in only two languages, with more calls in Spanish than in English. Research into the public policies adopted to deal with these problems offers scholars the opportunity to engage with social issues that affect crucially the lives of many people in contemporary societies. There are many different ways in which researchers can study these

problems. Section 9.3 discusses how translation studies scholars have approached public policy matters.

## 9.3    Approaching Public Policy in Translation Studies

For translation scholars, several approaches to public policy have shown to be fruitful. These include considering the policies themselves, the agents involved, and the complex interactions that are observed. Different methods can be applied, including the methods of the social sciences.

One approach understands public policy in terms of some of the conceptual models described in Section 9.1. Such models help operationalize policy by allowing for observation and measurement of specific variables. This helps gather data that can be analysed in order to arrive at useful conclusions. An example of how this might be done in translation studies is provided by Jim Hlavac et al. (2018). In seeking to account for the provision in Australia of translation and interpreting services, Hlavac et al. (2018, pp. 62–4) lean on conceptual models of policy formulation developed within policy studies. Having discussed several models (the Stages (Heuristic) model, the Institutional Rational Choice Framework, the Punctuated-Equilibrium Framework and the Advocacy Coalition Framework), they select the Multiple Streams Framework for their analysis. As they explain it, this model

> seeks to describe policy-making as a complex set of interactions with multiple actors, often with competing and unpredictable objectives in a surrounding environment that may be ambiguous or diffuse. The framework centers on three streams of actors or processes: the *problem stream*, the *politics stream*, and the *policy stream*. The three streams are regarded as existing in parallel within the policy-making environment until they are 'coupled', that is, joined together when propitious circumstances called *policy windows* open and when *policy entrepreneurs*, the actors who take advantage of the policy windows, place the idea on the decision-making agenda.                                (Hlavac et al., 2018, p. 63)

With this framework in place, they describe the development of translation and interpreting services in Australia, from the 1970s to the present. They identify the problem stream, the politics stream and the policy stream as these developed, including the opening of a policy window within which specific policy entrepreneurs acted (Hlavac et al., 2018, pp. 67–71). This method allows Hlavac et al. to reach useful conclusions, such as that 'activities, protagonists and conditions coalesced [in Australia] to bring about a national policy, multiculturalism, that after its adoption then became a macro-level policy that found representation in policy formulation for most government-funded services', including those relevant to translation and interpreting (Hlavac et al., 2018, p. 82). In other

words, translation policy emerged as a result of the development of a larger policy in favour of multiculturalism.

This approach is, of course, not the only possible way to consider public policy in translation studies. Employing policy models as tools for analysis allows the casting of a very broad net that can catch a varying range of elements for analysis, depending on the model of choice. Narrower scopes may be adopted as well, for example considering specific actors involved in the development of policy. When early policy researchers considered actors in the policy process, they often focused on government institutions. They tended to see political actors as separate from the rest of society who were bound by obligations and responsibilities and who belonged to organizational structures that provided specific outcomes (see March and Olsen, 1984, p. 735). These views evolved over time, and the role of institutions in policy formulation and development came to be questioned. Eventually 'formally organized social institutions [came] to be portrayed simply as arenas within which political behavior, driven by more fundamental factors, occur[ed]' (March and Olsen, 1984, p. 734). In short, institutions were relegated to the background because analysis focused on individual choices and specific forces exerted. In time, this new view came to be questioned too, and a more recent understanding of political actors turned the focus back on institutions, postulating that '[i]nstitutions seem to be neither neutral reflections of exogenous environmental forces nor neutral arenas for the performances of individuals driven by exogenous preferences and expectations' (March and Olsen, 1984, p. 732). Thus, when looking at public policy actors, researchers do well to take into account institutions, as these are key actors in the development of policy that cannot easily be dismissed.

Scholars in translation studies have considered the role of translation in institutions for some time. Articles exploring the relationship between translation and institutions have appeared in, for example, the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Kang, 2009), the *Handbook of Translation Studies* (Koskinen, 2011) and the *Routledge Handbook of Translation and Politics* (Schäffner, 2018). Koskinen (2008, p. 17) argues that institutions exist at three different levels: abstract (e.g., religion), formal (e.g., the Catholic Church) and concrete (e.g., local Catholic parishes). Methodologically, research into institutions and translation can fruitfully be carried out as the researcher moves from the abstract to the concrete, especially if the research question has to do with the common concern of translator agency (see Schäffner, 2018, pp. 216–17).

However, when considering matters of public policy, concerns about translators and their agency are but a piece of a much larger puzzle. They are to some extent individual performances that often play out in institutions that are powerful policy actors in their own right. For this reason, focusing too narrowly on translators and interpreters themselves risks missing the big policy questions, including general policy objectives and

whether these are effectively reached on a large scale. A broader scope that considers the role of the institutions themselves in policy development, implementation and evaluation can be useful in understanding the extent to which public policy creates translation (including interpreting) and for what purposes. For example, in an earlier study I have argued (González Núñez, 2016b) that institutional concerns for non-discrimination and recognition are two related policy interests that, through a complex interplay of management, practice and beliefs, have resulted in some democratic societies providing translation and interpreting as a matter of public policy.

Concerns relating to modelling of public policy development, including the role of institutions as key agents in such development, have led time and again to an awareness of the degree of complexity found in public policy (e.g., Morçöl, 2010). Indeed, public policy implies 'an extremely complex set of elements that interact over time' (Sabatier, 2007, p. 3), and it should come as no surprise that concepts of what has been termed 'complexity theory' have been applied to policy studies at least since the late 1980s (e.g., Kiel, 1989). As Jack Meek (2010, p. 1) argues, researching policy by borrowing from this paradigm offers 'attractive insights about behavior that helps [*sic*] address the limitations of rationally based policy and administrative logics that have guided much of our efforts in these areas of inquiry'.

In turn, translation scholars have also begun to take notice of the value of the concepts of complexity for their own field. In their edited volume *Complexity Thinking in Translation Studies*, Kobus Marais and Meylaerts (2019, pp. 2–3) invite scholars to conceptualize complexity as part of their models and theories. Methodologically, complexity offers challenges for translation scholars because there is no consensus as to how to approach it (Marais and Meylaerts, 2019, p. 14), but the conceptual advantages include the ability to study systems that have complex traits such as non-linearity, emergence and self-organization. Consequently, translation scholars who research policy are working with complexity paradigms as well. For example, Meylaerts (2017) applies complexity theory's concepts of non-linearity, complex causation, self-organization and emergence to Belgium's nineteenth-century language policies in terms of translation. This allows her to conclude that while 'we could understand Belgian language and translation policy in the 19th century as a linear evolution towards a more equal representation of the Flemish language and people in the public domain', it could also be understood as 'a myriad of sometimes contradictory and unequally applied language and translation rules, practices and beliefs' (Meylaerts, 2017, pp. 56–7). Other approaches are also possible (e.g., Li, forthcoming) because complexity theory offers powerful conceptual tools for analysing policy issues.

There are many methodological approaches to choose from besides those described in this chapter. Whatever the approach may be,

translation scholars can benefit from remembering that their study of public policy will be most helpful if it deals with problems that are pressing in society. Take, for example, the policy question raised in Section 9.2, namely, how to best allow people to talk to each other in a democratic society. In practical terms, this social problem can arise when immigrants to a country arrive with limited skills in the language of the state. This is a complex social problem. It involves many different agents who interact over time and who have different interests. The solutions these agents propose are sometimes in conflict and are, therefore, fertile ground for political controversy. Some believe that translation and language acquisition can coexist as policy measures to help individuals communicate in a given society (e.g., Little, 2010, pp. 31–2). Their solution is to provide opportunities for both. Others, however, have been very vocal in their view that a public policy that promotes translation in accessing services is a policy that encourages individuals to *not* acquire the state's language of choice and thus undermines society's strength. This argument was made by the United Kingdom's then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles (2013), when he stated to Parliament: 'Stopping the automatic use of translation and interpretation services into foreign languages will provide further incentive for all migrant communities to learn English, which is the basis for an individual's ability to progress in British society'. This proposed solution is a sink-or-swim approach: in terms of language, people should be allowed to 'sink' so that they have an incentive to 'swim'.

These kinds of politically charged controversies are often high on rhetoric and low on data, which opens a window for translation scholars to provide helpful insights. For example, Pokorn and Čibej (2018, p. 111) address 'claims in public debate and political discourse that the access to translation and interpreting services provided by the state reduces the incentive of recent immigrants to learn the dominant language of the host country and consequently hampers their linguistic and social inclusion'. Using questionnaires and interviews, they investigated the attitude of asylum seekers in Slovenia towards Slovene, the common language of their host country, and the effect that having access to interpreting had on their attitude. They learnt that asylum seekers in Slovenia, even when they rely on interpreters for interacting with the government, 'are all aware of the importance of learning the dominant language of the host country and express a wish to learn it' (Pokorn and Čibej, 2018, p. 123). In other words, the study provides empirical evidence that translation services for immigrants do not cause people to not want to learn the language of their host state. This makes sense intuitively as well – people have incentives to learn the language of their host society that go beyond communicating with the authorities.

In sum, the study of public policy in terms of translation and interpreting can be carried out through different methodological approaches.

These include the use of models developed in policy studies to understand how policy develops. In such studies, institutions emerge as key players, and the consideration of their role in developing public policy, including translation policies, can also be helpful in terms of understanding why translation and interpreting is deployed as a policy tool when and where it is. Because policy development is so complex, there are valuable insights to be gained by adopting concepts from complexity theory. The exact method to be used in these approaches will vary depending on the research questions.

These are not the only places from which helpful methodological and conceptual tools may be derived, of course. The field of language policy, for instance, provides the tools to develop concepts of translation policy, translation management and translation belief as a way to research translation policy (see González Núñez, 2016a). Whatever the approach may be, in matters of public policy, research is valuable as it deals with real-world problems that affect real people. In this regard, there is much that can still be addressed in translation studies. Section 9.4 will suggest some largely unexplored, promising avenues of research.

## 9.4 Future Avenues of Policy Research for Translation Scholars

The study of translation and interpreting in public policy offers many viable avenues of research. Several of these have been explored in this chapter, and studies such as those are likely to continue to be carried out fruitfully. One might imagine, for example, studies that consider the proposal and implementation of language and translation policies in different territories. In this sense, there remains largely unexplored ground, specifically in the developing world. In other words, in the future one might hope to see such studies becoming more geographically diverse. Currently, the geographical scope of published studies is mostly focused on Australia (e.g., Hlavac et al., 2018), Belgium (e.g., Meylaerts, 2017), Canada (e.g., Abraham and Fiola, 2006), Spain (Diaz Fouces, 2004), Switzerland (Grin, 1998), the United Kingdom (e.g., González Núñez, 2016b), the United States (Córdoba Serrano, 2016) and the European Union (Ginsburgh and Weber, 2011), that is, it is strongly focused on Europe, North America and countries with strong ties to what might be called the 'Western' tradition. For the most part, these are studies into the use of translation and interpreting in wealthy states. This may simply be the result of these areas investing in research. The European Union, for example, has provided generous funding through programmes such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

Even so, future research might purposely and helpfully look beyond the territories that have traditionally been the focus of study. This would

include research in places like Mexico and Paraguay, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, or China and India. Such countries offer specific scenarios that can proffer a richer understanding of how policy can be proposed and implemented in attempts to deal with social problems that differ from those found in Europe. For example, in a special issue of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Córdoba Serrano and Diaz Fouces, 2018), two articles move beyond the traditional geographies. Rosaleen Howard, Raquel de Pedro Ricoy and Luis Andrade Ciudad (2018) provide a brief overview of the legal framework relative to translation and interpreting in indigenous languages in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Paraguay before focusing on a case study in Peru. Nanette Gottlieb (2018) surveys the provision of translated information for foreign residents in Japan, where the national government is beginning to acknowledge diversity within its borders. Studies such as these are a welcome contribution to a body of knowledge with much potential for expansion.

These studies, owing to the context-specific nature of public policy, tend to be case studies, and one way for research in this vein to move forward would be to undertake a greater number of comparative studies, especially between territories that have been studied in the past and newer frontiers. Comparative studies encourage the development of better policies by showing how similar problems are approached in different contexts (Heidenheimer, Heclo and Adams, 2005, pp. 13–14). Many comparative studies already exist (e.g., González Núñez, 2017), but scholars might nonetheless benefit from comparisons between, for example, how Mexico deals with indigenous languages in the judiciary versus how Spain deals with traditional minority languages in the judiciary. How are indigenous groups in Mexico and traditional minority groups in Spain equally and differently situated? What are the language-related social needs and problems that arise, and what are the similarities and differences between how these affect the two groups? What solutions have been proposed and implemented? Have the implemented solutions enabled policy objectives to be achieved? Were increasing numbers of international comparative studies to be carried out, researchers might form a more comprehensive picture of the role of translation and interpreting in public policy.

Studies into public policy carried out by translation scholars tend to be skilful at identifying the problems that arise and at describing the policies devised to respond to those problems. However, policy evaluation largely remains a blind spot for translation studies. This area is relevant because policy-making is an ongoing cycle of policy proposal, implementation, evaluation and consequent adjustment (Hlavac et al., 2018, p. 62, after Jenkins, 1978). Thus, when considering the role of translation and interpreting in public policy, the evaluation of language and translation policies is a key element in appraising to what extent the policies as

implemented reach their intended goals. This appraisal is helpful in the formulation of better policies.

Despite this, studies into language and translation policy rarely engage in matters of policy evaluation. A notable exception is Michele Gazzola and François Grin's (2017) paper on the evaluation of comparative language and translation policies. Gazzola and Grin do not shy away from policy evaluation (see, e.g., Gazzola, 2014) because they are economists whose field of research is the economics of language (on this topic, see Grin, 2003). Thus, they are equipped with the tools to evaluate public policy, which translation scholars often lack. This is not to say that translation scholars are unable to address policy evaluation, but they may benefit from collaborating with colleagues in other disciplines, including economics and political science.

Whatever the case may be, the study of translation in public policy involves engaging in situations in which different groups in society disagree about key issues. In order for translation studies scholars to enter such arenas, highlight social problems, explore the proposed and implemented solutions and evaluate whether the objectives to those solutions are met, they need to develop an understanding of public policy and of the role of translation and interpreting as deployed in public policy. Methodologically, this can be approached in different ways, depending on specific research questions. Ultimately, this is done to better inform scholars, policymakers and the public at large about how we actually respond and how we should respond collectively to some of the challenges faced in a world where people are increasingly mobile and cities are growing increasingly larger, with all the linguistic implications of that reality. Acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in this field could impact the lives of millions of people across the planet and is therefore research worth engaging in.

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