

**To cite text:**

Lendvai-Bainton, Noémi, and Paul Stubbs. 2025. "Revisiting *Making Policy Move*: Towards a Decolonial Politics of Translation." *Philosophy and Society* 36 (3): 663–676.

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## REVISITING MAKING POLICY MOVE: TOWARDS A DECOLONIAL POLITICS OF TRANSLATION

### ABSTRACT

The co-authored book *Making Policy Move* (Clarke, Bainton, Lendvai and Stubbs 2015) was an attempt to apply insights from theories of translation and assemblage to the field of policy studies. The mantra "when policy moves it is always translated" was based, as much if not more, on postcolonial and decolonial theories as it was on the 'interpretive turn' in policy studies and on the idiosyncrasies of Actor Network Theory and the work of Deleuze and Guattari. In this paper, revisiting the book, we suggest that the conceptual, empirical, moral-ethical and political implications of taking colonialism and racism seriously were underdeveloped and we outline, in broad brush stroke terms, some of the ways this could be remedied in future work. We emphasize, in particular, the importance of a politics of translation for understanding coalescing crises, the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism, and the collapse of democracy and the associated rise of techno-politics. We seek to situate reconstituted racialised hierarchies, patriarchal and heteronormative ideologies, and forms of class oppression within policy assemblages co-constituted through colonialism and neo-colonialism.

### KEYWORDS

Translation,  
Assemblage, Policy,  
Politics, Decoloniality

## Introduction

The co-authored book *Making Policy Move* (Clarke, Bainton, Lendvai and Stubbs 2015) was an attempt to apply insights from theories of translation and assemblage to the field of policy studies. The mantra "when policy moves it is always translated" made some reference to postcolonial and decolonial approaches, but these were not central to many of the arguments presented. In this chapter revisiting the book, we suggest that the conceptual, empirical, moral-ethical and political implications of taking colonialism and racism seriously were underdeveloped in this work and we outline, in broad brush stroke terms, some of the ways this could be remedied. We emphasize, in particular,

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the importance of a politics of translation for understanding coalescing crises and the rise of authoritarianism, situating reconstituted racialised hierarchies, patriarchal and heteronormative ideologies, and forms of class oppression within policy assemblages co-constituted through colonialism and neo-colonialism.

This text is, deliberately, speculative in nature, seeking to use our work on policy translation, up to and beyond *Making Policy Move*, to think about elements needed for a politics of policy translation. The first section seeks to move beyond Actor Network Theory and interpretive approaches to policy as “meaning-making”. The second section focuses more directly on the importance of coloniality in policy translation. The third section outlines, briefly, some of the elements necessary for a politics of policy translation in the context of our current and future work. Throughout, we seek to point to those writers whose work has inspired us in the hope of stimulating dialogue and debate whilst bringing critical policy studies closer to work that may well not address policy centrally or even at all.

### **The Power of Meaning and the Meaning of Power**

Our own “journey to translation”, at least in terms of published work, began with two texts “Policies as Translation: Situating Transnational Social Policies” (Lendvai and Stubbs 2007) and “Assemblages, Translation and Intermediaries in South East Europe” (Lendvai and Stubbs 2009a), first presented as a conference paper in 2006. Re-reading these texts today for the purpose of this text, almost as if they were written by other people, we were struck by a number of things. Firstly, the puzzles we were trying to resolve, or at least shed light on, through our “turn to translation”, are clearly set out. Our focus was, almost exclusively, on turbulent and rapidly changing social policies in the Eastern European or South East European space - specifically, in one text, Hungary and Croatia and, in the other, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo - and on the interactions, if not the blurring of the very distinction, between ‘domestic’ and ‘international’ actors in the development and denouement of these policies. Secondly, our frustration with what we considered orthodox approaches to both ‘social policy’ and ‘policy transfer’ was palpable, felt as much as thought, with us describing these approaches, at times no doubt caricaturing them, as simplistic, linear, objectivist, rationalist, and institutionalist mono-worlds. As if to knock them off their pedestal, we threw an eclectic, at times chaotic and confusing, mix of concepts borrowed from a very wide range of theoretical traditions. We demonstrated little or no interest in pleasing those more firmly placed within one or another of these traditions, and little or no regard for the incompatibility of these approaches when used together.

Two of these approaches, in particular, were used rather more uncritically than we would now. The first is the work of Bruno Latour and Michel Callon generally considered as foundational to Actor-Network Theory (ANT). In the “Assemblages” text, it is this work that underpins the approach to translation,

seen as going “way beyond linguistics” and emphasising “the fluid and dynamic nature of the social world, where meanings are constantly transformed, translated, distorted and modified” (Lendvai and Stubbs 2009a: 676). Central to our use of ANT was the idea that human actors and non-human “actants”, enrolled in actor networks, shape and transform “claims, artefacts, discourses and interpretations according to their different projects” (ibid.). The “Policies as Translation” text repeats these arguments and juxtaposes the study of “knowledge networks, actor networks, agency, social relations, and processes” with “Institutions” (Lendvai and Stubbs 2007: 180).

Seduced by ANT’s playfulness and its methodological potential “as a way to investigate the messy thickness of social and political life” (Baiocchi, Graizbord and Rodríguez-Muñoz 2013: 324), we failed to critique ANT as a totalizing system critical of totalities nor did we confront head on ANT as a cult whose members not only claim that it can be used to explain everything, but that there is a fundamental imperative that it has to be so used. Nevertheless, our approach is close to Baiocchi et al insofar as we treat ANT as “a set of sensibilities”, as part of “a deeper, wider, more robust ethnographic imagination” (ibid.: 335). *Making Policy Move* does have its, thankfully brief, Latourian moment, in terms of the importance of “association” (and assemblage) and the suggestion that “it is the relationships of association that give meaning and weight to such things as policies” (Clarke et al. 2015: 38). Tentatively, however, we suggest that where we “might disagree with Latour” concerns “what exists before a specific act of network assembling takes place”, doubting the claim that that which is prior is “empty of pre-existing forces, arrangements and dispositions” (ibid.: 37). We are in desperate need of conceptual, theoretical and methodological frameworks that are able to disrupt conventional ‘policy teleology’ and ‘policy biography’. Policy ecology, elaborated beautifully by Tess Lea (2020) in *Wild Policy*, showcases a new approach which affords the anthropology of policy a possibility to trace messy associations and “the chaos of policy-related effects within overdetermined fields” (Lea 2020: 157).

The second set of approaches, which we critiqued more thoroughly in *Making Policy Move*, derives from the interpretivist school of policy research. Although the approach is less present in the “Assemblages” text, “Policies as Translation” uses the idea of “policy as meaning-making” and, indeed, “claims-making” as absolutely central to the argument, following Yanow, that policy is “fundamentally an interpretive process” (Lendvai and Stubbs 2007: 175; Yanow 1996) in the realm of social construction. Ironically, perhaps, this serves to reproduce a rather linear and rather flat, non-hierarchical distinction between policies as communicated and policies as read. Richard Freeman, who remains a key influence, similarly concedes too much ground to interpretivism in his early formulation that “policy ... is produced in the act of looking” (Freeman 2004, reproduced in Freeman 2008: 377). In *Making Policy Move* we link the interpretive turn with the argumentative, linguistic, discursive and even cultural turns as all concerned, albeit in different ways, with “the production, circulation and consequences of meaning” (Clarke et al. 2015: 17) but state clearly

that, “by itself, a concern with meaning is not enough” (ibid.: 19), worrying about the tendency in some of this work to render meanings “safe”. In other words, meanings “circulate, rather politely, in arguments and deliberative processes” or are seen as having been “installed within institutions” such that they “rarely appear as troublesome, turbulent or disruptive” (ibid.: 19). We suggest that meanings matter because “they are a point of contestation ... inextricably linked with forms and relations of power and authority” (ibid.: 20). For us, the study of policy “as a setting and a genre” takes us to sites where “meanings are made, contested, installed, naturalised and normalised, and in which power is organised, challenged and rendered normal or even invisible” (ibid.). In our rather antagonistic and contested contemporary socio-political landscape, understanding meaning-making with a renewed attention to power and authority seems ever more important.

This, inevitably, leads us to revisit how our early texts addressed power and power relations. We are struck by the attempt to hold together both a sense of power as fluid and power as cumulative and determinant. Although we state, clearly, that “translation is ... the very working of power”, our re-assertion that “individuals transform the knowledge, truths and effects of power each time they encounter them” (Herbert-Cheshire 2003: 46 quoted in Lendvai and Stubbs 2009: 676) and that social structure is a verb, not a noun (Law 1992 cited in Lendvai and Stubbs 2007: 181), appears to concede far too much ground to an idealistic understanding of the improvisational, liminal and contingent nature of power relations. Of course, our concern has always been to account for and trace asymmetries of power in specific conjunctures, or specific sets of relations, and to avoid deterministic formulations of the working of power in general. At times, however, this seems to have led to a relative lack of attention to historical power structures even though the idea of translation as “deeply and inevitably political” (Lendvai-Bainton 2018: 157) is present throughout, not least in terms of the capacity of policy, as translated, to produce “voice” for some and “silence” for others, as well as in the idea of translation as, always in variegated ways, being “structured in dominance” (Clarke et al. 2015: 191).

The erasure of power from our own disciplinary debates and conversations in the field of social policy has many roots, but most notably results in theoretical determinism and presentism. *Making Policy Move* was a direct challenge to both. Stuart Hall’s conjunctural analysis, taking insights from Gramsci, allowed us to problematise the ways in which dominant theoretical approaches had closed, rather than opened, discussion and, indeed, in some senses, had thrown away the keys (Hall 2021). Theoretical determinism triumphantly reproduced deeply Eurocentric and western-centric assumptions and practices, and promoted a one-way diffusionism (Hobson 2007) of *both* western knowledge and western learning. The directionality, and the institutional power, of this one-way diffusionalism was an incredibly powerful force throughout the 1990s and 2000s at a time when the entire Eastern block of ‘Europe’ had been thrown into the waiting room of the ‘European Union’ and treated as lacking something by other powerful actors. The same theoretical determinism also

contributed to classificatory foreclosures and closed the door on approaches such as neo-colonialism, necropolitics and others at the same time.

Presentism has not only dispatched rigorous historical studies to the margins, but also reduced and bracketed off the past to the present, both in terms of its understanding as well as its relevance. The best one could hope for in presentist policy studies was the assertion, rather than the empirical demonstration, of “path dependency” and “legacy effects”. The neglect of time, temporality, history and hauntology (Lea 2020) served not only to silence ‘different histories’, and alternative worldmakings (Lendvai-Bainton and Stubbs 2022), but also to erase the violent histories of Western European welfare states (Williams 2021) and the divorce of democracy from the plantation (Mbembe 2019); in shorthand terms the indelible relationship between welfare “at home” and colonial violence and extractivism “abroad”. Presentism has contributed, too, to a crude labelling of diverse Eastern European welfare assemblages as a particular ‘emerging’, ‘developing’, ‘transitioning’, and ‘Europeanising’ ‘welfare regime’ riding roughshod over spatio-temporal complexities and variegations and dismissing their politics as ‘backwards’ against a mythical western norm.

*Making Policy Move* also tried to reconfigure a discussion around the role of language and its power in the politics of translation. Spivak’s (1988, 2013, 2022) work has been very influential for us both in terms of framing our queries in and of translation, displacement, dislocation, and silencing. Socialised and disciplined in the worlds of policy studies, social policy, welfare regimes and modernist fictions in which state interventions produce ‘better outcomes’, Spivak’s theory of translation, where politics, power, inequality and agency are omnipresent, offered a way to think about bringing politics back in. For Spivak, translation is always a complex political act, a trace of the other, the trace of history and a complicated space inbetween languages and worlds. Spivak also sees translation as a way “out of our own academic and first-world enclosure” (Spivak 2022: 120).

Similarly to Spivak, Arundhati Roy ‘s (2022:12) reminder that the ‘knowing’ and the ‘not knowing’ of English play a great part in ‘allocating light and darkness’ remains prescient in the age of ‘homolingual address’ (Sakai 1996, 1997). The hegemony of Englishes, and the work of political, technical, cultural, ideological, social, and personal reinscription has been an ongoing theme of our writing, thinking and being, separately and together. Gadamer (2013: 407) highlights how “the linguisticity of understanding is the concretion of historically effected consciousness”, and as such translation can never be ahistorical. The silencing of non-English sources, the neglect of the role of the untranslatable, non-knowledge, and the sociology of silences has tended to greatly reduce the scope of translation, “as an encounter that affects all parts of the conversation” (Freeman 2009: 436). Quite ironically, one could argue that translation is erased in the ‘homolingual address’ of global *lingua franca* with all its associated assumptions of universality, singularity and presentism at the time when the need for translation (contingency, boundary work, conjunctural work, conversational work, non-hierarchical encounters)

has expanded. To paraphrase Stuart Hall, who stated that ‘without contingency there is no politics’ (Hall 2021), without translation there is no politics, and as such in a world of homolingual address, we may be being forced to live in a world without politics.

## Tangled Decoloniality and Decolonial Tangles

The “Policies as Translation” text refers, albeit in passing, to “postcolonial theory” in terms of recognition that one meaning of translate is to “conquer” (Kibberd 1995: 624, cited in Lendvai and Stubbs 2007: 177) drawing our attention to the “re-ordering of worlds” (Loomba 1998). The idea of “contact zones”, derived from the work of postcolonial literary scholar Marie-Louise Pratt, referring to “the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures and whose trajectories now intersect” (Pratt 1992: 6), has also been a key concept in our work. Nevertheless, the danger here is that, as indeed Pratt intended, the concept “foregrounds the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters” (ibid.: 6-7) rather more than their historicity and savagery. Our use of “postcolonial theory”, beginning with a 2007 conference paper later published as a chapter in a German language publication (Lendvai and Stubbs 2009b), has developed over time, not least as we attempted to understand Europe, Europeanity, and the European Union as colonial formations (Stubbs and Lendvai 2016) and in our broader critique of “global social policy” studies as trapped in a kind of historical “presentism” and failing to question the use of Northern and Western, largely Eurocentric, concepts to make universal knowledge claims (Lendvai-Bainton and Stubbs 2022).

*Making Policy Move* is strongly influenced by strands of postcolonial thought in a number of ways. One of the key conceptual framings is that of “post-colonial translation” as “representation, violence and power” (Clarke et al. 2015: 38-42). Despite reference to “colonial rule”, in which translation works to render the colonised legible, this remains rather general given that the book does not focus on colonial relations specifically and, indeed, cautions against the presumption that “the only significant formations and relationships are colonial” (Clarke et al. 2015: 39). In retrospect, the failure to address directly colonial relations actually diminishes the study of “domination, subordination and exploitation” that we suggest are “richer”, not the best choice of word, than being reducible to coloniality. Translation is described as “a double process” in terms of the capacity “to produce, reproduce and re-inscribe domination and also its potential to create the conditions and spaces of possibility for thinking and speaking ‘otherwise’” (ibid.).

The idea of policy “otherwise”, derived from the postcolonial approaches of Rojas (2007), Spivak (2012), and Escobar (2012, 2013), amongst others, frames the final chapter of *Making Policy Move*. “Otherwise” has become central to our commitment to a decolonial agenda in policy studies, “allowing for alternative ways of knowing” (Lendvai and Stubbs 2022). A policy otherwise

rests on a critique of policy as a practice of “global modernity” inextricably linking “master narratives”, “abstract universals” and “imperial desires” (Mignolo 2013: 2). “Otherwise” is a shorthand for the struggle for an alternative vocabulary as the basis for an alternative praxis, in which even terms such as “transition”, “transformation” and “crisis” seem to us too tame and barely able to scratch the surface of the realities of violent reorderings and systemic exclusions. Policy otherwise speaks to de Sousa Santos’ pleas for a sociology of emergences, of the “not-yet”, which “expresses what exists as mere tendency, a movement that is latent in the very process of manifesting itself” (de Sousa Santos 2004: 24). We advocate, in fact, a “double movement” of recognition of plans and projects together with being attentive to “interruptions, disjunctions and complexities” (Clarke et al. 2015: 195). However, these are not equivalents with equal chances of materialising – the power of policy modernity is such as to seek to crush alternatives, rarely succeeding completely to do so, of course. In pleading for relationality but not relativism, we have also found the work of Gibson-Graham inspiring in terms of striving for “empirical encounters and creative expressions of the new, the unthought, the unexpected” (Gibson-Graham 2006: 60).

*Making Policy Move* is about thinking conjuncturally; as Jeff Maskovsky has suggested: “conjunctural analysis enables a nuanced understanding of the emergent political forms of the present, and it ought to be embraced not out of any sort of clannish politico-theoretical fealty to Antonio Gramsci, Stuart Hall, or John (Clarke) himself, but rather because of its explanatory power; for it can advance the urgent task of explaining the dismaying political developments that we are enduring, contesting, and implicated in ways that other approaches cannot” (Maskovsky 2019). Using Cindy Katz’s work on “minor theory” (Katz 1996, 2017), he goes on to suggest that “conjunctural thinking is about the local and the particular as important sites for theorizing“. Minor theory, he argues, is “theory that, because it is grounded, fluid and relational and because it speaks to the problematics of our time with a commitment to the local and the particular, is the antidote to the masculinist, grand-narratives posturing of major theory” (ibid.). At the same time, perhaps not even fully recognised in *Making Policy Move*, there is a sense that the various particulars discussed in the four individually authored chapters of the book, be they Ladakh in India, Hungary in relation to the EU, the UK, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, speak to each other and are illustrative of broader processes at the same time. Translation, then, captures something of “the immense mobility of the policy process” (Lendvai and Bainton 2013: 117) with choices about what and how to compare being deeply political and, yet, far too often in danger of taking epistemic modernity for granted. In other words, whilst there can be no “theory in general”, much less “iron laws” of anything, a lexicon of critical policy translation does have some, albeit provisional, anchor points.

As Rada Iveković has argued in the introduction to a series of conversations inspired by her book (Iveković 2022, 2019): “Translation is political because it is a relation, a context of negotiating power” that “invites a complex

analysis of gender, class, race, or national and other hierarchies' relations and their intersection". In short, there can be no general theory of the intersections of class, gender, race and nation, but they must be present in each and every conjunctural analysis of the work of policy, not in a fruitless search for "definitive knowledge" since all knowledges are, as de Sousa Santos suggests, "reciprocally incomplete". For us, as for Iveković, policy translation is inseparable from patterns of coloniality-patriarchy-racism-capitalism. In the following section, we return to our own work to explore some aspects of the work policy performs within this assemblage.

### **Manifesting Urgency: an Urgent Manifesto - Elements for a Politics of Policy Translation**

Perhaps because of its orientation more towards providing a new epistemology for policy studies, *Making Policy Move* seems to us, now, to lack a sense of urgency in terms of addressing the interlocking crises of "democracy, capitalism, globalisation, environment, nature and climate, empire, history and memory" (Lendvai-Bainton 2022: 22). These coalesce, in Wendy Brown's terms, in a "state of siege" in which "reactionary populism, nativism, racism, and xenophobia" rage (Brown et al. 2018:1). Tracing the production of insecurities and the expansion of violence as central to contemporary governance challenges the explicit, or implicit, techno-legal understandings of policy and its study. Instead, a focus on the translation of violence, the co-production of what Mbembe terms "necro-politics", "blurring the relationship between violence, murder, and the law, faith, commandment and obedience, the norm and the exception, and even freedom, tracking and security" (Mbembe 2019: 6-7), is needed. How to understand policy translation in terms of an assemblage of three orders – the plantation, the colony, and democracy – never able to be fully separated but combining and recombining in variegated ways, seems to us to be a major challenge.

There is a need, then, to foreground the study of enclosures, of "hierarchies, insecurities, dispossessions and dehumanisation" (Lendvai-Bainton 2022: 31), rather than crude "west is best" comparative slope imaginaries such as "democratic backsliding" and "illiberal democracies" much loved within a particular strand of Europeanisation scholarship. The use of racist tropes to discuss Europe reaches its apotheosis in Marlene Wind's *The Tribalization of Europe* (2020), defining tribalization as 'tribalist tendencies as a kind of Balkanization'. Scholars of 'Europe' have, it seems to us, an obligation to use language reflexively and to reflect on their use of language. As we noted above, when concepts such as "backsliding" are used in relation to countries in Eastern Europe but rarely, if ever, to Western European countries, an explicitly culturalized and implicitly racialized hierarchy of "civilisation" and "modernity" is being produced and reproduced. Mbembe reminds us of the importance of challenging the radicalisation and brutalisation of everyday language. Necro-politics, in many ways, signals the normalisation of demeaning, brutal, and violent language

whether it be in everyday, political, academic, or other registers. The brutalisation of language represents a significant shift for the politics of translation, not only because it changes the conversation, but also because it affects what is possible and what is speakable, thinkable and actable.

As Piro Rexhepi suggests, “understanding how modernity, capitalism and coloniality have structured power relations across different regions around the world ... requires different methods and vocabularies” (Rexhepi 2023: 19). Critical policy translation, in a sense, offers a heightened sensitivity to, and understanding of, how orthodox policy analysis neutralises and tames these understandings, through an obsession with “nationalism” or “ethnicity”, as in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, for example. Importantly, some strands of Marxism, themselves products of a Eurocentric modernity-coloniality nexus, often do the same or similar, as in the denial of the role of racialised labour and the displacement of racialised communities or, more generally, how “the integration of post-socialist people and spaces into the Euro-Atlantic alliance has served as a strategic spatial bordering of racial difference” (ibid.: 20-1). A critical policy translation, then, is suspicious of clear distinctions between the “inside” and the “outside” of policy analysis, too often constrained by methodological nationalism. Rexhepi helps to develop a new lexicon for policy translation in terms of the ways in which spaces and places are “enmeshed in borderland projects of race, religion and modernity” (ibid.: 24) or what one of us has termed “the importance of studying the local and global logics of race, class and place together” (Lendvai-Bainton 2022: 28).

A similar shift, from a focus on policy analysis concerned with “women’s rights” to “a decolonial feminism” can be found in Françoise Vergès’ inspirational work, critical of a broad “civilizational feminism” that is able to bracket slavery, colonialism and imperialism as if “outside” or “at a distance” (Vergès 2021: 34). Her book can also be read as a toolkit for building a genuinely transversal and intersectional analysis, as a kind of relearning taking into account “the *totality* of social relationships” (ibid.: 47, emphasis in original). The struggle for epistemic justice, “a struggle that ... contests the order of knowledge imposed by the West” (ibid.: 39), is not abstract but rather starts from one element to begin “to uncover a political, economic, cultural, and social ecosystem” drawing a large number of threads together “to highlight the concrete and subjective networks of oppression that weave the web of exploitation and discrimination” (ibid.: 49). In many ways, this is close to Dorothy E. Smith’s call for “institutional ethnography” as a means of rendering visible the ways that agents “are connected into the extended social relations of ruling and economy and their intersections” (Smith 2005).

A decolonial turn in policy translation analysis, then, does not merely add decoloniality on to more conventional approaches but, rather, as Taylor-Garcia suggests, “works to redefine the very conditions in which knowledge is produced and legitimated, situating ethical relationships as central, and recognizing that what is put forward is the basis for thinking through another world” (Taylor-Garcia 2012: 5). Studying ‘colonial assemblages’ forces us to confront

“a confluence of colonialisms” (ibid.: 12) since “the delineated boundaries of influence by colonial empires were not ... fixed” (ibid) either spatially or temporally. Although we might question her (self-styled) caricature that “policy’s first-order job is aiding and abetting the interests of extractive capital, pushing profit upward in the name of economic development, financial debt, and corporate web” (Lea 2020: 19), Tess Lea’s use of Patrick Wolfe to see coloniality as “a structure and not an event” (Wolfe 2007) and Ghassan Hage (2016) in terms of the ways in which contained histories and geographies ‘leak out’ seem to us to be suggestive of how to build a decolonial understanding into policy translation, providing the embeddedness of coloniality in policy is addressed in all its variegated forms and not assumed to be, or treated as, prior. Her plea for work that shows the “wild workings” of policy “beyond narrative conventions and out of the confines of epochal policy chronologies” (Lea 2020: 25) requires reflexive translation at all times.

Our work continues to engage with what Čarna Brković has termed ‘the awkward’ position of Southeast Europe, and we would add, Eastern Europe, in terms of “conversations on decolonization” and the need to “unearth subaltern (...) forms of knowledge and being that have been ignored and silenced both by capitalist modernity and socialist modernity” (Brković 2023: 28). Her brilliant historiography of attempts to promote a Non-Aligned perspective on peace within the international Red Cross Movement in the 1970s precisely shows how policy translations rarely, if ever, conform fully to the frame of the modernity-coloniality nexus whilst, also, rarely if ever, able to completely escape such a container. This suggests, perhaps, that a politics of policy translation should be one that connects histories and ethnographies of the circulation of transnational imaginaries and circuits of decolonial affinity sensitive, above all, to their ambivalent and contradictory elements.

## Conclusions

The moral-ethical project of translation requires, then, “counter-lexicons”, “new vocabularies”, a “perceptual re-alphabetization” (Tichindeleanu 2023: 40) as well as moving away from unquestioned Eurocentrism. Racism, along with varieties of re-patriarchalization and heteronormative familialism, must be seen as internal to the European (policy) project: colonial, racialized and gendered hierarchies are important for understanding the ways in which social inequalities, destitution, indebtedness and multiple forms of disenfranchisement have been key features of a new authoritarianism, not just in supposedly “outlier” EU Member States, but across the continent as a whole. Understanding Eurocentrism remains on the very margins of academic disciplines in fields such as policy studies, social policy, and even global social policy and correspondingly decolonial approaches to both research, policy and teaching are slow to emerge. Yet, a counter-lexicon is a necessary but not sufficient condition for struggles for radical equality and reflexivity, able to initiate new conversations with new voices around the table. As Mbembe argues: “we will

effectively require a language that constantly bores, perforates, and digs like a gimlet, that knows how to become a projectile, a sort of full absolute, of will that ceaselessly gnaws at the real. Its function will not only be to force the locks, but also to save life from the disaster lying in wait” (Mbembe 2019: 189). ‘Europe’ needs new narratives and new conversations to begin to address the multiple and overlapping crises and translation, with or without politics, which will be a companion on this journey.

Politics of translation also requires us to think more about peopling policy worlds. The multiple and overlapping crises of racialisation, re-patriarchalisation and dehumanisation have profound impact on translators, be they policy-makers, brokers, activists, social workers or other professionals and intermediaries. Professional practices, agencies and ethics are rapidly changing. Giroux (2016:79) in his book *Dangerous Thinking in the Age of the New Authoritarianism* argues that the “new mode of authoritarianism mimics a form of terrorism because it abstracts economics from ethics and social costs, makes a mockery of democracy, works to dismantle the welfare state, thrives on violence, undermines any public sphere not governed by market values, and transforms people into commodities”. For Giroux privatisation, atomisation and commodification represent the three key axes of new authoritarianism. The transformation of public spaces and public spheres is also critical in the practice of “*the state as a disimagination machine*”, which refers to the ongoing production of “images, institutions, discourses and other modes of representations that undermines the capacity of individuals to bear witness to a different and critical sense of remembering, agency, ethics and collective action” (ibid.: 74). Translators will need new counter-agencies to be able to work towards decolonizing practices and possibilities and new imaginings in the continuing struggle for an ethical politics of translation.

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## Preispitivanje knjige Making Policy Move: Ka dekolonijalnoj politici prevođenja

### Apstrakt

Zajednički napisana knjiga *Making Policy Move* (Clarke, Bainton, Lendvai i Stubbs 2015) bila je pokušaj primene uvida iz teorija prevođenja i asembliranja u oblast proučavanja javnih politika. Mantra „kada politika putuje, ona se uvek prevodi“ zasnivala se, jednako ako ne i više, na postkolonijalnim i dekolonijalnim teorijama, koliko i na „interpretativnom zaokretu“ u studijama politike i na osobenostima teorije aktera-mreže i radova Deleza i Gatarija. U ovom radu, preispitujući knjigu, sugerišemo da su konceptualne, empirijske, moralno-etičke i političke implikacije ozbiljnog shvatanja kolonijalizma i rasizma bile nedovoljno razrađene i u grubim potezima ocrtavamo neke načine na koje se to može ispraviti u budućem radu. Posebno naglašavamo značaj politike prevođenja za razumevanje ukrštanja kriza, uspona autoritarnog neoliberalizma i urušavanja demokratije, kao i sa tim povezanim usponom tehnopolitike. Nastojimo da smestimo rekonstituisane rasijalizovane hijerarhije, patrijarhalne i heteronormativne ideologije i oblike klasne opresije unutar asemblira politika koji su ko-konstituisani kolonijalizmom i neokolonijalizmom.

Ključne reči: prevođenje, asembliranje, politika, politika, dekolonijalnost