Boéri, J. (2024). Translation for social justice: concepts, policies and practices across modalities and contexts. *Linguistica Antverpiensia, New Series: Themes in Translation Studies, 23*, 1–16

# Translation for social justice: concepts, policies, and practices across modalities and contexts

**Julie Boéri**
Hamad Bin Khalifa University
jboeri@hbku.edu.qa
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1013-4806

## Abstract

The transnational nature of contemporary movements, media and networks in our globalised and interconnected societies has placed translation at the heart of counter-hegemonic discourses and endeavours. In this context, translation has become a powerful prism through which to think about and practise social justice. Although largely intellectualised in relation to Western liberal welfare states, social justice is also a performative and interpersonal prism of social change with roots historically spread across cultures, traditions and territories and with ramifications in contemporary forms of resistance. Thus, whereas social justice has traditionally been understood as the fair distribution of means and resources and the recognition of people's rights across status in a given society, the increasing interconnection of struggles across the world has broadened social justice in ways that raise the stakes of translation. The leveraging and enactment of the multiple rights which social justice now encompasses is contingent on the organisation, the practice and the theorisation of translation in all its modalities (translation, interpreting, bilingual facilitation, fixing, subtitling, dubbing) and across communication contexts of resistance (social movements, media networks, cultural institutions). This special issue of the journal explores social justice by delving into specific areas and modalities of translation and interpreting practices. At the same time, it engages with macro-societal issues that affect these practices. These issues range from the power (and the limitations) of translation in circulating counter-hegemonic ideas and knowledge across borders in the publishing, media and cultural industries to the development of curricular, pedagogical and policy-making strategies in a higher education system that is both technologically disrupted and ableist-structured. The issues also include the public institutions' exclusionary communication practices inherited from colonialisation, patriarchy, and ableism, and the subsequent expectations and actual practices of language professionals' support to migrants and other vulnerable citizens in this context. The contributions gathered in this special issue contribute to expanding the boundaries of the constantly evolving field of translation while deepening our reflection on the ways in which education, research and practice may reproduce, contest and disrupt systemic injustices.

**Keywords:** activism; concepts; contexts; modalities; social justice; translation; ablism.

## Introduction

More than a decade ago, as Carol Maier and I introduced our collective volume *Compromiso Social y Traducción/Interpretación – Translation/Interpreting and Social Activism* (2010), published by ECOS, traductores e intérpretes por la solidaridad, we underlined how sensitive the role of translators and interpreters had become in an epoch that, we felt, was marked by a paradox: the claim of unity brought about by globalisation, on the one hand, and the increasing lack of understanding, empathy and recognition and the resultant conflict, on the other (Boéri & Maier, 2010, p. 1). However, in the footsteps of the First International Forum on Translation and Activism held in 2007 in Granada (Spain) there was at the time a feeling that change was on its way in translation and interpreting (studies). Bringing together activists, professionals and academics who exchanged their views and experiences on the practice, the theory, and the pedagogy of sociopolitical engagement, the forum provided a landmark opportunity for setting a social justice agenda in the field. The Granada Declaration (2010), adopted by the participants on the last day of the forum, called for the field of practice and enquiry to be expanded beyond mainstream society to reposition itself in opposition to the devastating effects of neoliberal globalisation and wars of occupation and in favour of intercultural enrichment, linguistic diversity, peace, and justice. The Declaration was inspired by both the scholarly criticism of longstanding misconceptions of neutrality and impartiality and the activist practice of associations and networks in social movements. Consequently, it stands as the first collective attempt to build not only a mutually supportive and inclusive scholarly, professional, and activist community of translators and interpreters but also a more just society.

Fourteen years later, this special issue on translation for social justice in *Linguistica Antverpiensa, New Series: Themes in Translation Studies* (*LANS-TTS*) is an attempt to reconvene with authors, editors, peer-reviewers, and readers in the same spirit of contributing to counter-hegemonic discourses and endeavours that are capable of responding to the multiple crises of our times. The past decade's increased normalisation of suprematist, patriarchal, heterosexual, and ableist discourse and policies, together with the climate, environmental, health, and food crises, plus the escalation of occupation into genocide, may well sound the death knell of social justice. Massive amounts of data and commodities travel around the globe seamlessly. However, the large majority of the people in the global south and in the disenfranchised spaces of the global north are locked in locations that bear the brunt of an unsustainable and destructive global economy that benefits only a few. As our societies are becoming increasingly interconnected into a uniform system of the exploitation of labour and the extraction of resources at the expense of our ecosystems, contemporary social movements, media, networks and organisations continue to work locally and transnationally towards alternative modes of doing and thinking. In this asymmetrical power relationship, scholars and practitioners of translation and interpreting play a complex and determinant role not only in social movements but also in civil and mainstream society.

This introduction provides an overview of the way social justice has been theorised and the potential of translation and interpreting as a field of practice and enquiry to contribute to

rethinking social justice beyond the Western liberal tradition. It then delves into the contributions to this special issue, highlighting the ways in which the different contexts and modalities of translation covered by the contributors sketch a compelling landscape in which to rethink social justice in and beyond translation studies.

## Joining the dots between social justice and translation

Largely intellectualised in relation to Western liberal welfare states (Rawls, 1971), social justice was first conceived of as the redistribution of wealth and primary goods across social positions to ensure liberty and fairness. This paradigm of liberal individualism reduces the notion of justice to individuals' access to material goods; it is hardly equipped to account for the oppression and emancipation of social groups. Social movements in the 1990s and theorists of justice have challenged this paradigm because it eschews ethnic, national, religious, and gender differences.

In *Justice and the politics of difference*, Iris Marion Young (1990) criticises this difference-blind approach to politics and policy. She takes issue with the application of the same principle of redistribution across social positions, because it fails to take into account the structural inequalities of race, gender, class and sexuality (e.g., division of labour, processes of normalisation, hierarchical decision-making power) that inhibit some people's ability to develop and exercise their capabilities while offering opportunities to others. Different from identity politics, Young's politics of difference rests on what she refers to in later work as "positional difference" rather than "cultural difference" (Young, 2008, p. 77). Whereas both theories contest the liberal paradigm, they embody different understandings of social justice. She argues that positional differences acknowledge that citizens are differently constrained in their abilities to develop and achieve well-being because of deliberately discriminatory laws or more subtle dynamics of differentiation: "adherence to body aesthetic, struggle over power and other dynamics of differentiation" (p. 81). Consequently, she argues that

> to remove unjust inequality it is necessary explicitly to recognise group difference and either compensate for disadvantage, revalue some attributes, positions or actions or take special steps to meet needs and empower members of disadvantaged groups (p. 81).

While social group differences intersect with cultural differences, the former are not reducible to the latter. What Young calls "the politics of cultural difference" originates in the work of Charles Taylor (1994) and Will Kymlicka (1995) and opposes the liberal paradigm by emphasizing the question of the freedom of political self-determination and the cultural expression of ethnic, religious, and national groups. In her critical review, Young alerts us to the risk of outstripping these aspirations from the racialised, gendered, and ableist structural inequalities within which they emerge. The politics of cultural difference often slips into multiculturalism and public debates on what should or should not be tolerated and accommodated in the state policies of liberal societies. For these reasons, it risks normalizing the dominant culture and reproducing the Western liberal tradition it set out to oppose from the outset. Pressing for the freedom and autonomy of particular cultural groups over equality of opportunities in and across these groups eschews the question of the unequal opportunities that are brought to bear in conflicts over

ethnic, national, and religious differences (Young, 2008, p. 102). Shifting structural into cultural problems obliterates structural inequalities. This phenomenon, which Piller (2007) refers to as "culturism", may essentialise and homogenise cultures further. As a consequence, the dialogic intra- and intercultural interactions that dynamically shape cultures (see Benhabib, 2002; Parekh, 2000) can hardly be mobilised to resolve intercultural conflict (Young, 2008, p. 93).

Young's "politics of positional difference" and the "politics of cultural difference" echo what Nancy Fraser (1998) refers to as the "participatory parity approach" and "identity politics". The former term is a general principle according to which the possibility of reciprocal recognition and structures of egalitarian distribution must be guaranteed to all members of society. The second refers to the ascendency of group identities over class interests in denouncing injustices in post-socialist conflicts (Fraser, 1998; Young, 2008, p. 94). Both terms are subsumed under "politics of recognition", which, like Young's "politics of difference", expresses a response to the *structural* inequalities of gender, race, and sexuality eschewed by Rawls' liberal paradigm. Arguing that social justice requires both redistribution and recognition in contemporary globalizing capitalist society, Fraser (1998) integrates the two paradigms to accommodate defensible claims of both social equality and recognition of difference. And while this integration may take different forms (e.g., articulating binaries or fusing them into a monistic framework (see Fraser & Honneth, 2003)), it should emancipate itself from the "deficient recognition" model (p. 141) of the liberal tradition because it problematically frames recognition as a reward for individual merit and accomplishment. Instead, integrating the politics of recognition and that of redistribution can act upon the power structures that have typically disadvantaged some groups (e.g., queer, people of colour, people with disabilities) and favoured others (e.g., white, secular, cis-gendered, able-bodied).

Transnational social movements provide fertile ground for experimentation with instrumental and expressive goals, class and identity, and material and symbolic resources. The collapse of communism, the explosion of feminist consciousness, and the politics of multiculturalism have ushered in the emergence of so-called new movements that have broken away from "instrumental movements" by stressing expressive goals and self-realisation rather than traditional issues of labour and production (see Pizzorno, 1978, 1985; Melucci, 1986; Touraine, 1985, in particular). However, as Young (1997) reminds us, feminist, anti-racist, LGBTQI+, and disability liberation movements may press for cultural recognition not as an end in itself but as a means to achieving economic and political justice. Indeed, in the case of global social movements, the literature highlights the fact that social justice is not only an overarching goal, but also an organisational, communicational, and transformative practice with roots historically spread across cultures, traditions, and territories. Social justice as a practice also has ramifications in global forms of resistance, including struggles for the rights of human beings, animals and nature (Chesters & Welsh, 2004; Santos, 2005; Maeckelbergh, 2009; Marcos, 2001). This contrasts with the conceptualisation of social justice as the leverage of citizens' rights in the welfare state. Indeed, the increasing interconnection of struggles across the globe broadens social justice to equip people to respond to the global crises of our times brought about by labour, gender, disability, climate, racial, and linguistic injustices.

The stakes of translation and interpreting have accordingly been raised by the international resonance of these diverse struggles. Equally, they have been raised by the shift in the targets of their grievances and demands (i.e., from national to supranational institutions) and activists' increased awareness of the futility of dismantling structured injustices in our interconnected world without embracing the principles of equity, recognition, and inclusion within the movement. Scholars interested in the intersections between translation and social justice reinvest this transnational and intersectional mindset in multiple sectors of society. Indeed, the leveraging and enactment of the multiple rights which social justice encompasses are contingent on the organisation, practice, and theorisation of translation in all its modalities (i.e., translation, interpreting, bilingual facilitation, fixing, subtitling, dubbing) and across those communication contexts of resistance (i.e., social movements, media networks, cultural and public institutions).

The wealth of translation and interpreting literature in the context of social movements, international non-governmental organisations, and media networks accounts for the dynamics of dominance and resistance in the liminal spaces between activism and the service economy in which translators and interpreters operate (Baker, 2013; Boéri, 2008, 2012, 2023a; Fernández, 2021; Pérez-González, 2010, 2016; Piróth & Baker, 2021; Tesseur, 2023). It also addresses the subsequent ethical questions that these dynamics raise for our field of enquiry and practice (Boéri, 2023b; Boéri & Delgado Luchner, 2021). In this light, civil society constitutes fertile ground in which to explore how translators and interpreters contribute to the deliberative medium through which human beings enact social justice and to a counter-hegemonic force capable of dismantling systemic injustices (see Boéri, 2012; Doerr, 2018). However, mainstream institutions should not be overlooked: their policies and practices of translation and interpreting inherit and perpetuate the violent structured inequalities that translators and interpreters may either reproduce or resist, whether in state public services and institutions (Inghilleri, 2012; García-Beyaert, 2017; Valero-Garcés & Tipton, 2017; Meylaerts, 2011; Monzó-Nebot, 2020; Monzó-Nebot & Lomeña-Galiano, 2024) or in international warfare, conquests, colonisations, occupations, and genocides (Baker, 2006/2019; Inghilleri & Harding, 2010; Rothman, 2021; Price, 2023; Korak & Schögler, 2024; Zaragoza de Léon, forthcoming).

Given the co-option of civil society and mainstream institutions by market interests, research on social justice ought also to extend to the neoliberal economy and to what increasingly resembles a dystopic industry. This is because its modes of labour production, mediation and extraction impinge on the right of vulnerable citizens to translation and interpreting (Boéri, forthcoming). These modes also exploit both translators and interpreters (Giustini, 2024; Piróth & Baker, 2021) and researchers in and outside the field (Boéri & Baker, forthcoming).

Last but not least, because education is a key environment in which to advance social justice, translation and interpreting pedagogies and curricula have emphasised the performative and reflective nature of learning both practical and theoretical skills in line with a social justice approach (Bahadır, 2011; Boéri, 2010; Boéri & de Manuel Jerez, 2011; Gill & Guzmán, 2011). Indeed, the performative nature of translation may well function as a common denominator across all spheres of society in taking account of the intersectionality of cultural and political

struggles for social justice (Baer & Kaindl, 2017; Castro & Ergun, 2017; Taviano, 2016; Baldo, 2020; Baldo et al., 2021; Tachtiris, 2024).

Building on this rich and constantly evolving literature, this special issue of *LANS-TTS* themed "Translation for social justice" is an attempt to renew our understanding of the way social actors think about and perform social justice beyond the monolingual and expert paradigms of the Western liberal tradition. Related to this, this special issue is also an attempt to shine light on the counter-hegemonic potential of translation that tends to be overlooked in an all-too-often monolingual account of the processes of domination and resistance. At the same time, it sets out to reveal the agency of the translation actors as they perform their duties, in the process of departing from and rethinking the deontological principles of impartiality and expertise.

## Translation for social justice: the contribution of this issue

Bringing together studies from across contexts, regions, territories and modalities of resistance, this special issue is devoted to the challenges and the stakes involved in overcoming the multiple barriers that stand in the way of social justice. In the vast and constantly expanding field of translation and interpreting (studies), the practices covered cut across the areas that have traditionally formed subdisciplines (or subareas of practice) of translation studies: literary translation, machine translation, interpreting, audiovisual translation, accessibility. But they also continue to expand the boundaries of this field of practice and enquiry.

This special issue opens with a contribution by Mahmoud Alhirthani on the translation and re-narration of Mahmoud Darwish's poetry. Himself a translator and a multilingual editor, this internationally and nationally acclaimed Palestinian political intellectual has produced two poems which Alhirthani analyses as two distinct and complementary attempts at achieving social justice: "Identity card" in 1974 and "A soldier dreams of white tulips" in 1967. Expanding translation into re-narration across languages and modalities equips Alhirthani to uncover the multiple layers of mediation at play in Darwish's experimental poetry in its production, circulation, and reception. The dialogic poems are Arabic translations of two encounters between Darwish and an Israeli soldier and two aesthetic "translations" of his political stance: one of confrontation with a soldier at a check point ("Identity card") and the other of reconciliation with a soldier filled with remorse for the crimes he committed against the poet's own people ("A soldier dreams of white tulips"). Alhirthani provides a compelling account of the retranslations of the two poems across political circles: "Identity card" is acclaimed by Palestinian society and in progressive Israeli circles but manipulated in its re-translation into Hebrew by representatives of the state of Israel. "A soldier dreams …", in contrast, is negatively received in an Arab world torn by the devastation of the 1967 war; but it is revived decades later when the soldier in the poem reveals himself to be Shlomo Sand, Israeli writer and activist, who by then had fled his country and become an ally of the Palestinian cause. Alhirthani reminds us of the power and limitations of (re-)translation and (re-)narration to counter hegemonic narratives of selves and others that continue to stand in the way of justice for the Palestinian people.

The circulation of texts across languages and countries has historically played a role in advancing social justice against colonial and dictatorial regimes. Adopting Amartya Sen's (2009) processual approach to social justice, Blanca Juan Gómez explores the power of translation to enable social justice in processes of democratisation. Focusing on the translation of Raymond Williams' ideas in the Spanish-speaking world, she provides a bibliographical analysis of those Spanish translations of Raymond Williams' texts that have been published to date. Placing particular attention on the sociopolitical context in which these translations took place, and on the agendas and agency of the actors involved, she identifies three phases of democratisation – the Spanish transition to democracy, the period after the military dictatorship in Argentina, and the aftermath of the 15-M movement. She also identifies three related main hubs of translation: Barcelona, Buenos Aires, and Madrid. Accounting for the non-linear translational process of progressing towards social justice, her study provides three important takeaways: (1) the power of democratisation rests on the translation of democratizing ideas as much as it rests on the democratizing social fabric within which it aims to take root and to have an impact; (2) translation and re-translation act as a powerful tool with which to weave solidarity links across time and space, and (3) the translation decision-making process does not always evince the democratic principle of diversity and inclusion, as is evidenced in the prevalence of peninsular Spanish and the erasure of "Argentinisms".

Cultural industries are key players in the circulation of knowledge for advancing the rights of people across sociopolitical contexts and histories. Another key player is education, which ought to include citizens and prepare them to serve society as a whole. Moving to the contemporary challenges posed to social justice in education, three contributions, each set in a different higher-education context, conceive of social justice as a key driver of an inclusive, equitable, and accessible education and society.

In the first of these, which focuses on higher education in Canada, Renée Desjardins and Valérie Florentin reflect on the nexus between technology, translator training, ethics, and social justice. They propose a list of strategies intended to rehumanise translator training in the wake of social inequalities and technological disruptions. Adopting an original stance on technologies and ethics, they frame technologies beyond translation-specific tools and translation-technology courses, just as they frame ethics beyond translation-specific issues. The scope of their enquiry is thus widened to the broader socio-technological and demo-linguistic panorama of higher education within which translator education is situated. They root their timely proposal in the Canadian higher-education landscape, which they sketch by means of a review of the mainstream and academic discourse on technological disruption (particularly AI), social justice, and translators' training. Whereas the recent literature in translation studies on the matter tends to be limited to translation-specific technologies, the press and social media cover broader technological shifts. The authors' data allow them to position their proposal as a critique of those structural inequalities that hinder access to education and which technologies may partly mitigate, partly exacerbate. They also comment on the top-down policies in higher education that tend to reduce the ethical implications of AI to a matter of mere surveillance and sanction. Placing the ethos of social justice and EDIA (equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility) at the core of

their proposal, they suggest a set of strategies in favour of a translator training that is more humane and humanizing, that is more attuned to Canada's demolinguistic profile, and to the benefit of those who are most in need of linguistic justice.

Taking us to the Spanish higher-education context, Cristina Valderrey Reñones reports on a concrete experience of incorporating social justice into translators' training through Service Learning, a methodology specifically designed to fuse students' experiential learning and social commitment. The study is conducted within TRADAPS, a project of the Department of Translation and Interpreting of the University of Salamanca that offers students the opportunity to carry out the Final Degree Project in collaboration with NGOs which assist the local migrant population. Within this framework, Valderrey Reñones examines the learning acquired by the students who participated in the project, with a particular focus on knowledge acquisition about social justice. Her analysis combines a model of social justice based on the dimensions of redistribution, recognition, and representation–participation with notions drawn from the critical strand of Service Learning. Exploring the concepts of otherness and reciprocity, the author draws on a field diary prepared by the student and the semi-structured interview conducted with the person in charge of the student's follow-up in the entity at the end of the collaboration. She demonstrates that the Service Learning methodology enables local NGOs to alleviate their lack of resources, which in turn enables the migrant minorities they serve to enjoy social justice rights.

If higher education is to serve society as a whole, it ought to be accessible to all citizens. Irene Hermosa-Ramírez and Blanca Arias-Badia appraise the accessibility of the higher-education system in Catalonia, Spain. They focus on "sensory media accessibility", a field of enquiry that sits at the intersection of audiovisual translation and accessibility studies and which typically deals with media solutions (e.g., subtitling, audio description, sign language interpreting, translation) for people who encounter vision and hearing barriers to accessing a product or a service in its original form. Linking linguistic rights and disability, media accessibility functions as a yardstick with which to appraise the capacity of our higher-education systems to include people with disabilities across sensory and language barriers and to enact social justice. This is an area in which much remains to be done, as their literature review and study attest to. Adopting a phenomenological approach, they conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives of organisations that support people with disabilities (i.e., d/Deaf and hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted) in order to investigate the shared experiences of their users in higher education, the attitudes of stakeholders, and the opportunities for policy-making in this area. They also provide an account of the experiences of accessibility professionals (i.e., sign language interpreters) with a particular focus on their practices, working conditions, and perceptions. Their study confirms that ableism, "deaf- and blind-obliviousness", attitudinal inaccessibility, and unwarranted invisible work for students and interpreters, all stand in the way of accessibility. They alert their readers to the need for accessibility literacy at all levels and also to the need to involve the relevant communities – in this case, those organisations representing disabled people – that place education at the centre of their mission to make social justice a reality in higher education.

The perspective of users is indeed crucial to understanding what may either hinder and enable social justice in public services such as education, health, or any other administrative body or function of the state, where the rights of users to participate fully across language and sensory barriers must be ensured.

In her response to the call for including the perspective of users in academic discussions about community interpreters' role and ethics, Agustina Marianacci explores the views and positioning of Latin American Spanish-speaking migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand through the lens of "allyship". Marianacci draws on Nieto et al.'s (2010) definition of allyship as "awareness plus action" (p. 127). Different from advocacy, which is specifically designed for interpreters to act in the name of the user when the latter is faced with harmful behaviour, allyship in Marianacci's study means awareness of the systemic oppression of and marginalisation against migrants and the subsequent development of meaningful and accountable relationships that enact and perform social justice in triadic encounters. Drawing on a horizontal methodology designed by transdisciplinary scholars to minimise the researcher's authority and academic distance, she engaged with the users through one-on-one dialogues and then with users, interpreters and a community representative by means of a group dialogue. Her study reminds us that the "conduit" is not a mere metaphor but affects interpreters' users, who feel that interpreters' primary focus on linguistic accuracy compounds their vulnerability and leaves them ill-equipped to engage meaningfully in a bureaucratic and discriminatory communication process. Beyond interpreting linguistic skills, users expect humane and caring interpreters to possess the necessary social and relational skills that enable them to build a relationship of trust and allyship with their clients.

However, the very possibility of the community interpreting profession advocating social justice may be constrained not only by the prevailing norms of neutrality, but also by the dispersed nature of community and public-service interpreting (PSI), across settings, services, and individual interpreters who operate in a neoliberal industry. Whereas advancing social justice demands that the perspective of users be included, it also requires an investigation of interpreters' engaged practices that may be obliterated by professional norms. Indeed, in her qualitative study with public service interpreters in the United Kingdom, Deborah Giustini highlights the reality that engaged practitioners do act towards social justice, in spite of their PSI dispersed assignments and the subsequent difficulty of organizing formally around an activist collective of public service interpreters. Framing these public service interpreters' engaged practices as "non-organised, dispersed forms of activism", she draws on practice theory to analyse 34 in-depth interviews with the interpreters. She finds that they negotiate neutrality against the apolitical normalisation of their role and that they contribute to "political reparation" which, however dispersed, "aggregates" towards "restorative justice".

Taking stock of interpreters' "otherness"-oriented practices (in Giustini's study) and users' expectations of allyship (in Marianacci's) can contribute to equipping scholars, educators, and practitioners to face the politically, socially, and emotionally challenging nature of public service and community interpreting. The time is ripe for a political critique of institutions and for political recognition of those communication practices that act in response to harm and trauma and

advance social justice. This agenda goes hand in hand with the grounding of social justice enquiry and theory in a dialectic of dominance and resistance, which is at times global and context-specific.

As alluded to above, power structures have typically disadvantaged certain groups, including the LGBTQI+ community. In the context of the Chinese government's increasingly tight censorship of queer audiovisual content, queer fansubbers turn to non-confrontational activist strategies. In order to link queer fansubbing groups' activist practices to the adverse cultural–ideological milieu within which they are embedded, Song Qijun draws on *han-xu* politics. *Han-xu* is an aesthetic–ethical value of restraint and harmony that harks back to Confucianism and which impinges on the manifestation and communication of sexuality and queerness in China. Encompassing *han* (holding back) and *xu* (storing up), *han-xu* constitutes a twofold strategy of invisibilisation and crackdown to which the media industry responds by invisibilising queerness and avoiding any association with queer products and genres. Against this backdrop, Song provides a case study of Wanwan, a lesbian-oriented fansubbing community, and contributes to the literature on queer activist translational fandom in China. Through a detailed analysis of their selection and diversification of content, their recontextualisation of subtitles, their reflexive use of paratexts and other spaces of online interactions, Song shows that the group challenges the entrenched cis-heteronormativity in Chinese society in a non-confrontational manner. Wanwan combines the creation of a "by queer for queer" community with the need to reach out to cis-heteronormative groups while avoiding the exacerbation of cultural and ideological tensions that may antagonise them.

Solidarity is key in the face of significant drawbacks in LGBTQI+ rights all over the world, particularly regarding the exposure of non-heteronormative representations of children and young adults in the publishing industry. Cihan Alan's study of the Turkish translation of Alice Oseman's queer graphic novel *Heartstopper* by Ömer Anlatan, titled *Kalp Çarpıntısı*, is a particularly compelling case of the solidarity between the translator, the publisher and citizens in and beyond LGBTQI+ circles with regard to publishing a same-sex teenage romance in contemporary AKP-ruled Turkey. The author investigated the performativity of *Kalp Çarpıntısı* as a translation and focused on the practices of translation agents who were involved in the translation, publication, and reception of *Heartstopper* in Turkey. This study provides a qualitative analysis of Ömer Anlatan's engagement with the graphic novel and its portrayal of LGBTQI+ youths; this analysis is augmented by a semi-structured interview with the translator and book reviews. The study reveals the translator's multimodal interventions in the text, driven by his professional background as a counsellor and his knowledge of the language used by the LGBTQI+ community in Turkey. It accounts for the unwavering support of the publisher despite public controversies and for the timely sociopolitical impact of the translation in and beyond LGBTQI+ circles in Turkey. Combining (para)textual analysis and interviews, Cihan Alan accounts for the performativity of queer translation and its potential to create deliberative spaces in which to advance social justice for queer youths in adversarial political contexts.

Translating non-normative representations of children's and young adults' bodies is particularly sensitive, not only in respect of sexual orientation but also of disability. In her study of *Dear Future Mom*, a video campaign addressed to women expecting a child with Down Syndrome and featuring Down Syndrome children as protagonists, Stefania Taviano examines the "political" translation and retranslation of disability. Combining critical translation studies, feminist disability studies, and media accessibility, she frames the video as a political translational space where the ableist rhetoric is deconstructed. Analysing the inclusion of children with disability in the multilingual film and their portrayal as fulfilled children having fulfilled lives, she contends that the video advocates a social model of disability according to which the human rights of people with disabilities rest on everyone's responsibility to tear down the social barriers erected against their inclusion as full citizens in society. Expanding the analysis to the controversial reception of the video campaign, she provides a compelling critique of the medical model that informs the ban of *Dear Future Mom* on the grounds that it revived the trauma of women who had chosen to abort, and subsequent court rulings. Revealing the deep and widespread legal, social, and cultural implications of the medical model for people with disabilities and their relatives, her study calls for alternative political (re-)translations of disability in line with disability activism and social justice struggles.

Audiovisual productions offer key opportunities to circulate crafted narratives that denounce the repression of citizens based on their identity, culture, and political beliefs. In such narratives, the fictionalisation of translation in films, for example, provides a powerful device for aesthetic and political creativity. This special issue concludes with the Spanish translation of a dialogic paper I co-authored with Rana Kazkaz, the co-director of the narrative film *The Translator*. The story is set against the backdrop of Bashar Al-Assad's crackdown on Syria's 2011 peaceful demonstrators who were calling for freedom and dignity from an authoritarian regime which – at the time of writing this introduction – has eventually just been overturned. The film features Sami as its main protagonist, a translator who is forced to seek refuge in Australia to escape the consequences of a slip of the tongue, which was broadcast on television. Years later, he returns to Syria to find his disappeared brother. The paper revolves around our interdisciplinary collaboration as translation scholar and filmmaker/screenwriter of the story. Adopting a dual focus on the process and product of screenwriting, our conversation explores our use of fictionalizing multiple modalities of activist translation (i.e., interpreting, subtitling, fixing, self-translating) to mediate the Syrian revolution between two contexts (Syria and Australia), between two languages (Arabic and English) and between the Syrians themselves (those risking their lives in Syria and those feeling guilty for the privilege of living abroad). Our dialogic paper reflects on the experience of projecting the film to a transdisciplinary, multilingual, and multicultural audience and on the complexities of translating high-risk activism and global politics in films. Ultimately, it illustrates the way interdisciplinarity can contribute to improving creative and academic endeavours.

Together, the articles gathered in this special issue cover the specificities of subareas of translation practice. At the same time, they engage with multiple interventions at a macro-social level.

## Towards a translational approach to social justice

Just as it explores the interventionist practices of translators and interpreters in specific contexts and areas of enquiry, so this special issue also focuses on the macro-sociopolitical dynamics within which they are embedded. These dynamics include the circulation of counter-hegemonic ideas and knowledge across borders in the publishing, media, and cultural industries; curricular, pedagogical, and policy-making strategies in a technologically disrupted and ableist-structured higher education system, and the support which language professionals (ought to) provide to migrants in the wake of exclusionary communication practices in public institutions. They explore the structural inequalities based on race, nationality, gender, class, (dis)ability, and sexuality that have been inherited from colonisation and patriarchy. It is these very inequalities that impinge on the practices of organizing and communicating across difference, in social movements, civil society, the private and public sectors, and also in their liminal spaces. The wide scope of the practices covered here – rewriting, translation, reception, retranslation, self-translation, interpreting, fansubbing, film-making – function as an entry point to the interrelated questions of equity, recognition, and inclusion that are posed by social justice theory.

Accounting for the challenges faced by practitioners, scholars, and educators to enact and leverage social justice, this special issue attests to the political repositioning of translation studies that has taken place since the Granada Declaration drafted 14 years ago. The body of knowledge yielded by the study of social justice in translation over the past decade or so, and in this special issue in particular, deepens our understanding of the concepts, policies, and practices of social justice between the modalities and contexts where translation is organised, practised, taught, and theorised. However, given the multiple challenges to social justice that this special issue attests to, the time may well be ripe to adopt a translational approach to social justice that expands it to encompass the cross-language, cross-cultural, and cross-epistemic mediation of knowledge. Indeed, scholars from outside translation studies have been turning to translation as a concept with which to address their social justice concerns (see Santos, 2005; Doerr, 2018). This development has the potential to open a deliberative space in which scholars from different disciplines and movements are able to explore the ways in which both the concept and the practice of translation are being appropriated by academics and citizens to confront social injustice and enact social justice. For instance, in a special issue on “translational and narrative epistemologies”, co-edited by Mona Baker and John Ødemark, Fruela Fernández (2024) explores translation both as a political concept used by left-wing activists and political representatives in post-15M Spain, and as a practice of mediating between the language of mainstream politics and that of the majority of society. These practices, which he refers to respectively as “hierarchical translation” and “horizontal translation”, develop from the two different epistemological standpoints of expertise versus egalitarianism.

By our focusing on the interplay between dominant and insurrectional forms of knowledge production – in and through translation, in and beyond national territories, within and between different disciplines – we can employ a translational approach to social justice to account for the ways in which knowledge is mediated across social actors’ experience of social (in)justice and the

theories that pertain to it. Such theories and practices are themselves tied to particular histories and geographies in the global counter-hegemonic drive. This emerging translational territory grounded in social justice ought to expand beyond the humanities and social sciences, though. This is necessitated by the complex crises of our time which call for the inclusion of the medical and health sciences (Baker & Engebretsen, 2022; Ødemark & Engebretsen, 2022), but also of any other fields of enquiry and practice, since social justice is a transdisciplinary concern. Given the transnational nature of the counter-hegemonic drive, this translational and transdisciplinary approach to social justice needs to be not only deliberative, but also participative and inclusive. That is, it needs to deal with the racialised, gendered, and ableist structural inequalities that affect the capacity of science (translation studies included) to redress social injustices and enact social justice.

As the open science movement reminds us, science cannot be equitable, inclusive, and accessible without translating knowledge across languages, cultures and epistemes (UNESCO, 2021). To promote social justice in science and society, however, open science needs not only to translate scientific outputs: it also needs to foster a humane translational approach to the production and circulation of knowledge. This is a complex process that can enrich scientific dialogue and deliberation, open up disciplinary, linguistic, and racial silos, and bypass the inequitable and destructive ecocidal AI-powered infrastructures that reduce translation to a mere vector of the large-scale dissemination of research findings (Boéri & Baker, forthcoming). Translation scholars, professionals, practitioners, educators, and activists all have a key contribution to make to this sociopolitical agenda.

## References

Baer, B. J., & Kaindl, K. (2017). *Queering translation, translating the queer: Theory, practice, activism*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315505978

Bahadır, Ş. (2011). Interpreting enactments: A new path for interpreting pedagogy. In C. Kainz, E. Prunč, & R. Schögler (Eds.), *Modelling the field of community interpreting: Questions of methodology in research and training* (pp. 177–210). LIT Verlag.

Baker, M. (2006/2019). *Translation and conflict: A narrative account*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429438240

Baker, M. (2013). Translation as an alternative space for political action. *Social Movement Studies*, *12*(1), 23–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2012.685624

Baker, M., & Engebretsen, E. (2022). *Rethinking evidence in the time of pandemics: Scientific vs narrative rationality and medical knowledge practices*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009030687

Baldo, M. (2020). Activist translation, alliances and performativity: Translating Judith Butler's *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* into Italian. In R. Gould & K. Tahmasebian (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and activism* (pp. 30–48.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315149660_3

Baldo, M., Evans, J., & Guo, T. (2021). Introduction: Translation and LGBT+/queer activism. *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, *16*(2), 185–195. https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.00051.int

Benhabib, S. (2002). *The claims of culture: Equality and diversity in the global era*. Princeton University Press.

Boéri, J. (2008). A narrative account of the Babels vs. Naumann controversy. *The Translator*, *14*(1), 21–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2008.10799248

Boéri, J. (2010). Emerging narratives of conference interpreters' training: A case study of ad hoc training in Babels and the Social Forum. *Puentes*, 9, 61–70. https://wpd.ugr.es/~greti/revista-puentes/pub9/08-Julie-Boeri.pdf

Boéri, J. (2012). Translation/interpreting politics and praxis. *The Translator, 18*(2), 269–290. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2012.10799511

Boéri, J. (2023a). Online ethnography of activist networks of interpreters: An "ethnonarrative" methodology for socio-political change. *The Translator*, *29*(2), 210–230. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2023.2190440

Boéri, J. (2023b). Steering ethics toward social justice: A model for a meta-ethics of interpreting. *Translation and Interpreting Studies, 18*(1), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.20070.boe

Boéri, J. (forthcoming). Posthumanism *avant la lettre*: A Foucauldian approach to 'technology' in the interpreter- and video-mediated asylum procedure in France. In Ş. Bahadir, S. Baumgarten, & R. Pacheco Aguilar (Eds.), *Posthumanist thinking in translation and interpreting studies: Humans, machines and epistemic change*. John Benjamins.

Boéri, J., & Baker, M. (forthcoming). Against market ideologies and AI-powered translation: Advancing a humane approach to translation and open science. *Encounters in Translation*, 3.

Boéri, J., & de Manuel Jerez, J. (2011). From training skilled conference interpreters to educating reflective citizens: A case study of the Marius Action research project. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, *5*(1), 41–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2011.10798811

Boéri, J., & Delgado Luchner, C. (2021). The ethics of activist translation and interpreting. In K. Koskinen & N. K. Pokorn (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook on translation and ethics* (pp. 245–261). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003127970-19

Boéri, J. & Maier, C. (2010). Introduction. In J. Boéri & C. Maier (Eds.), *Compromiso social y traducción/interpretación – Translation/interpreting and social activism* (pp. 1–6). ECOS.

Castro, O., & Ergun, E. (2017). *Feminist translation studies: Local and transnational perspectives*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624

Chesters, G., & Welsh, I. (2004). Rebel colours: 'Framing' in global social movements. *The Sociological Review, 52*(3), 314–335. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2004.00482.x

Doerr, N. (2018). *Political translation: How social movement democracies survive*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108355087

Fernández. F. (2021). *Translating the crisis: Politics and culture in Spain after the 15M*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003105121

Fernández. F. (2024). Hierarchical vs. horizontal political translation in post-15M Spain. *Encounters in Translation*, 2. https://doi.org/10.35562/encounters-in-translation.522

Fraser, N. (1998). *Social justice in the age of identity politics: Redistribution, recognition, participation*. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung. https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/44061/1/269802959.pdf

Fraser, N., & Honneth, A. (2003). *Redistribution or recognition?: A political philosophical exchange.* Verso.

García-Beyaert, S. (2017). Public concern, public policy and PSI: The public dimension of language interpreting. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, 75, 15–29.

Gill, R. M., & Guzmán, M. C. (2011). Teaching translation for social awareness in Toronto. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer (ITT)*, *5*(1), 93–108. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2011.10798813

Giustini, D. (2024). Interpreting one's way through the Gig Economy: Neoliberal shifts and the platformisation of interpretation work. In A. Jalalian Daghigh & M. Shuttleworth (Eds.), *Translation and neoliberalism.* Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73830-2_10

Granada Declaration: Manifesto in favour of translation and interpreting at the service of society as a whole and of all societies (2010). In J. Boéri & C. Maier (Eds.), *Compromiso social y traducción/interpretación – Translation/interpreting and social activism* (pp. 156–157). ECOS.

Inghilleri, M. (2012). Interpreting Justice. Ethics, politics and language. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203147962

Inghilleri, M., & Harding, S. A. (2010). Translating violent conflict. *The Translator, 16*(2), 165–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2010.10799467

Korak, C., & Schögler, R. (2024). Translational moments identified. Deliberating translation in qualitative research. In C. Bading, K. Kazzazi & J. Wintzer (Eds), *Sprache und qualitative sozialforschung: forschungsstrategien in interkulturellen kontexten*. Springer.

Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0198290918.001.0001

Maeckelbergh, M. (2009). *The will of the many: How the Alterglobalisation Movement is changing the face of democracy*. Pluto Press.

Marcos, S. (2001). *Our word is our weapon: Selected writings*. Seven Stories Press.

Melucci, A. (1986). *Nomads of the present: Social movements and individual needs in contemporary society*. Temple University Press.

Meylaerts, R. (2011). Translational justice in a multilingual world: An overview of translational regimes. *Meta: Journal Des Traducteurs, 56*(4), 743–757. https://doi.org/10.7202/1011250ar

Monzó-Nebot, E. (2020). Translation, power, ethics: Challenging injustice in cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. *Linguapax Review, 8*, 13–31.

Monzó-Nebot, E. & Lomeña-Galiano, M. (Eds.). (2024). *Toward inclusion and social justice in institutional translation and interpreting: Revealing hidden practices of exclusion*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003349914

Nieto, L., Boyer, M. F., Goodwin, L., Johnson, G. R., Smith, L. C., & Hopkins, J. P. (2010). *Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment: A Developmental Strategy to Liberate Everyone*. Cuetzpalin.

Ødemark, J. & Engebretsen, E. (2022). Challenging medical knowledge translation: Convergence and divergence of translation across epistemic and cultural boundaries. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 9*(71). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01088-6

Parekh, B. (2000). *Rethinking multiculturalism: Cultural diversity and political theory*. MacMillan.

Pérez-González, L. (2010). 'Ad-hocracies' of translation activism in the blogosphere: A genealogical case study. In M. Baker, M. Olohan, & M. Calzada Pérez (Eds.), *Text and context essays on translation and interpreting in honour of Ian Mason* (pp. 259–287). St Jerome Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759739

Pérez-González, L. (2016). The politics of affect in activist amateur subtitling: A biopolitical perspective. In M. Baker & B. B. Blaagaard (Eds.), *Citizen media and public spaces: Diverse expressions of citizenship and dissent* (pp. 118–135). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315726632-7

Piller, I. (2007). Linguistics and intercultural communication. *Language and Linguistics Compass, 1*(3), 208–226. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2007.00012.x

Piróth, A., & Baker, M. (2021). Volunteerism in translation: Translators Without Borders and the platform economy. In E. Bielsa & D. Kapsaskis (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and globalization* (pp. 406–424). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003121848-33

Pizzorno, A. (1978). Political exchange and collective identity in industrial conflict. In C. Crouch & A. Pizzorno (Eds.), *The resurgence of class conflict in Western Europe since 1968* (pp. 277–298). Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-03025-5_11

Pizzorno, A. (1985). On the rationality of democratic choice. *Telos: Critical Theory of the Contemporary*, 63, 41–69. https://doi.org/10.3817/0385063041

Price, J.M. (2023). *Translation and epistemicide. Racialization of languages in the Americas*. The University of Arizona Press.

Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674042605

Rothman, N. (2021). *The dragoman renaissance: Diplomatic interpreters and the routes of orientalism*. Cornell University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501758485

Santos, B. D. S. (2005). The future of the world social forum: The work of translation. *Development*, *48*(2), 15–22. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.development.1100131

Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674054578

Tachtiris, C. (2024). *Translation and race*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003180166

Taviano, S. (2016). Translating resistance in art activism: Hip Hop and 100 Thousand Poets for Change. *Translation Studies, 9*(3), 282–297. https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700.2016.1190944

Taylor, C. (1994). The politics of recognition. In A. Gutmann (Ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition* (pp. 25–73). Princeton University Press.

Tesseur, W. (2023). *Translation as social justice: Translation policies and practices in non-governmental organisations*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003125822

Touraine, A. (1985). An introduction to the study of social movements. *Social Research, 52*(4), 749–787.

UNESCO (2021) *UNESCO Recommendation on open science*. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949_eng

Valero-Garcés, C., & Tipton, R. (Eds.). (2017). *Ideology, ethics and policy development in public service interpreting and translation*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783097531

Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton University Press.

Young, I. M. (1997). Unruly categories: A critique of Nancy Fraser's dual systems theory. *New Left Review, 223*, 147–160.

Young, I. M. (2008). Structural injustice and the politics of difference. In G. Craig, T. Burchardt & D. Gordon (Eds.), *Social justice and public policy: Seeking fairness in diverse societies* (pp. 77–104). Bristol University Press. https://doi.org/10.46692/9781847423535.005

Zaragoza de León, J. (forthcoming). *Interpreting the Amistad Trials: How interpreters and translators make and shape history*. Bloomsbury.