



Call for Papers
International conference

Cultural Diversity and Funded Translations: Between Institutional Gatekeeping and the Market, Past and Present

April 20th–22nd, 2026
Rambla de Poblenou, 154-156, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona

In 2021, during US President Joe Biden's inaugural speech, Amanda Gorman, a Black American poet, highlighted the invisibility of non-white authors and staked a claim for diversity. Four years later, President Trump has approved a series of executive orders to roll back efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion programs under the guise that they are dangerous and threaten the civil rights of the nation. Diversity has been persecuted in the United States, and measures favoring equality around race, sexual orientation, religion, and national origins have been revoked. Elsewhere, the world has also witnessed severe forms of discrimination, such as the undermining of Indigenous rights during President Bolsonaro's tenure in Brazil and the attacks against the LGBTQ+ community under President Milei in Argentina. Such attacks only accelerate cultural homogenization and constitute major setbacks regarding the global consensus around the growing importance of linguistic, racial, gender, and ethnic collectivities, as highlighted by the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), the Black Lives Matter Movement (2013), and the Indigenous Languages Decade (2022-2023) proclaimed by the United Nations.

The idea of diversity is understood in very different ways by policymakers. Indeed, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity does not provide a unique definition but rather considers diversity as embodied "in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind" (UNESCO, 2001). Over the last few years, current scholarship has agreed that cultural diversity plays a fundamental role in international relations (IR) and cultural diplomacy (Beat Graber, 2006; Garner, 2016). However, the discussion has not generally been applied in translation studies, and we lack insights into the kinds of cultural diversity, in a broad sense, that state and non-state translation policies, as well as local and national cultural organizations funding translations, are promoting.

This conference understands diversity as cultural plurality in the literary field and aims to reveal how state and non-state actors are committed to it. Our goal is to explore how cultural diversity is represented by funded literary translations, both in the present and

in the past, and how these translations contribute to the global circulation of literary texts between the state and the market, involving institutions as gatekeepers, the publishing industry, and readership. Many topics covered by IR partially overlap with those covered by scholars who either work in global literary studies, translation studies, or in cultural relations, given their interest in foreign cultural promotion, cultural projection, and culture in general as resources of power. However, only recent contributions have laid the foundations of an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that contributes to overcoming previous disciplinary fragmentation and studies the relationship between translation and the concept of soft power (SP) (Nye, 2021) in the broader framework of IR. Our perspective is framed within the sociology of translation, but we also apply the concept of SP to the study of translations (Roig-Sanz, Campanella and Carbó-Catalan, 2025; Carbó-Catalan and Roig-Sanz, 2021).

In this respect, there is no doubt that over the last few years, translation programs have significantly grown. They have become key contributors to the production of literary value and symbolic capital and are an excellent tool for the dissemination and projection of national literatures in the international literary market. We aim to gather papers analyzing some of the mechanisms through which governments—whether of regions or states—and non-state organizations exert agency and contribute to the market by funding translations in the literary field. By doing so, we aim to reassert the role of public and private agents in the global literary space (Sapiro, 2016; Sapiro and Heilbron, 2018) and to reconstruct their translation policies (Meylaerts, 2011) at different scales (local, national, regional, and global) (Roig-Sanz and Rotger, 2022). We will focus on public agencies, that is, on organs related to the state with ad hoc programs to sponsor translations in the framework of broader projects of cultural diplomacy and foreign cultural action, but also other kinds of public and private organizations funding translations (please see a few examples below).

Understanding the position occupied by different types of bodies and agents in each national field and in the transnational literary field is crucial. Funded translations present varying degrees of autonomy vis-à-vis governments and non-state organizations, thus occupying uneven positions in the continuum of the autonomous and heteronomous poles. Their relative autonomy, however, is central to understanding their agency. On the one hand, autonomy from government is often a precondition for social legitimacy, so as to clearly distinguish the bodies' endeavors from propaganda efforts. On the other hand, since they are often funded by public actors, they materialize the involvement of public actors in literary circulation and, in some cases, these endeavors are or have been connected to propaganda. In any case, it is evident that, as cross-cultural communication processes (Fan, 2008), funded translations and the agents involved in its production process, both in the present and in the past (authors, literary agents, translators, publishers that own and purchase rights, printers, booksellers, etc.) participate in nation branding and contribute to building a nation's soft power.

We take the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity, published in 2001, as a fundamental milestone with which to examine cultural diversity in funded translations, both in the present and in the past. We welcome paper proposals highlighting specific historical and cultural contexts, as well as theoretical and/or methodological contributions. Possible topics can cover the following research areas:

1. Theoretical developments. Research on translation policies has experienced some noteworthy theoretical developments in the last years, including important shifts in terms of emerging paradigms, nuanced concepts, and interdisciplinary research. Furthermore, we have witnessed a relevant transition from static policies to more dynamic, relational, networked policies. This conference proposes a shift from the exclusive analysis of state-centric policies to a multi-actor and multi-scalar examination of state and non-state actors (translators, publishers, and markets). We also highlight the relevance of transnational translation flows, which can offer interesting insights on how translation policies are considered within societal debates and the literary marketplace. Please see below a few concepts that allow us to theorize translation as increasingly geopolitical in relation to the field of international relations and global history. In what follows, we list a few examples, but we welcome other theoretical reflections.

- **SP in translation:** reflections on how states and non-state agents regulate literary translations and cultural goods as soft power. We assume the hypothesis that the translation policies promoted by, for example, national institutes for culture are an effective tool for soft power and nation branding. In this respect, we welcome case studies reflecting on how we may apply SP to the circulation of translated languages and literatures.

- **Nation branding:** this conference will explore specific milestones and events that may explain the marketing and nation-branding of literature through translation. For example, we may observe grants for translations following the prizing of an original literary work or financial aid for the dissemination of those books in important events such as book fairs (Guadalajara, Frankfurt, Cairo) that play a fundamental role in the sale of translation rights.

- **Sponsored translations/supply-driven translations/funded translations/subsidized translations/supported translations:** often used as synonyms, these terms are frequently operationalized to designate our research object. Whilst the debate around the naming of the phenomenon might seem less important than that on its effects and functioning, it is crucial to discuss the nuances and implications of the terminology employed, as this may enhance the understanding of the object and its different parts.

- **Bibliodiversity:** The conference will apply the term bibliodiversity as a way of engaging with the different types of literary genres and the economic dimension of the book industry, as well as approaching different kinds of publishing (Hawthorne, 2014). Even when they seem co-dependent in the publishing field, the connection between cultural diversity and bibliodiversity has yet to be explored.

2. Agencies: types of institutions, types of agents. Funded translations can be materialized under different modalities: from direct patronage to the creation of ad hoc bodies with varying degrees of autonomy vis-à-vis governments. This conference privileges the study of public agencies but encourages presentations on other bodies. Our goal is to foster a global comparison of bodies and institutions promoting translation flows that take into account their different features and, rather than universalizing a type of body, explore cases of structural homology. Please see below a few examples:

- Supranational bodies such as international organizations. This is the case of the Creative Europe program, which includes the funding scheme Circulation of European Literary Works and the European Union Prize for Literature (Codina and McMartin 2024).

- Bodies occupying an ambiguous position in the public/private binomial, that is, philanthropic foundations with private funding, such as the Open Society Foundations by George Soros.
- Other bodies promoting translation, such as professional organizations, as is the case of the Publishers Association of New Zealand Te Rau o Tākupu (PANZ), which works independently but is closely related to the government.
- Educational organizations (universities).
- Private institutions such as the Mikhail Prokhorov Fund, an institution founded in the Krasnoyarsk region in 2004 to promote Russian culture internationally. This fund is behind the Transcript project, an initiative to translate Russian literature into foreign languages.
- Philanthropic entities such as the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Along these lines, we may also mention Words Without Borders (WWB), an international translation magazine that is partly supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and Amazon Literary Partnership. In South Korea, the Daesan Foundation, a body established under the auspices of the insurance company Kyobo Life, funds two translation programs: one for the intranlation of world classics and one for the extranlation of Korean works.

In terms of individual agents, this conference aims to go beyond current scholarship focusing on translators' agency (Kaindl et al., 2021; Brown, 2017) through historical (Delisle and Woodsworth, 1995), archival (Munday, 2012) or ethical approaches (Venuti, 1995, 2019), also moving beyond the existing literature on the translator's invisibility (Freeth, 2024). Instead, we aim to explore the relationship between agents and funding bodies. For example, we may consider publishers and translators receiving subsidies. On the other hand, we also seek to look into the increase in cases of offshoring, by which multiple translators and publishers are no longer located in the host country.

We welcome conference papers exploring this diversity of agents and agencies, examining, for example, how international organizations handle translation policies, the requirements to apply for translation grants, and how diversity appears in these requirements. Also, we encourage reflections on why translation policy should be reframed as cultural policy rather than as mere language policy.

3. Cultural diversity, funded translations, and the literary marketplace. Translation policies are often aligned with market trends, thus reinforcing its tendencies. The granting of funds for translations can also contribute to relevant social debates. To explore this hypothesis, we propose reflecting on issues related to gender equality and the promotion of women and queer authors, on the one hand, and bibliodiversity, on the other. To this end, we take intersectionality as a key concept with which we may cross multiple marginalities and consider translation policies in relation to gender, but also regarding other categories, such as ethnicity, class, nationality, age, religion, and sexual orientation. This lens will allow us to explore the representation of women writers and queer authors as well as the promotion of more inclusive and non-binary language forms. The point is not to pile on different elements of identity but to view social reality in all its complexity and to understand “what gets translated” versus “what doesn't.”

Thus, we suggest the following questions as starting points:

- What kind of gender diversity do translation policies promote?
- Does this representation reinforce or oppose the one proposed by the publishing market?
- What translation policies are in place to ensure gender-inclusive language?
- What kinds of writers benefit from translation subsidies, and what identities are excluded?

We also encourage the following questions:

- What kind of bibliodiversity do translation policies enhance?
- What literary diversity in terms of genres and writing is encouraged?
- What about publishing diversity?
- What types of publishers (independent, small, conglomerates, others) benefit more often from translation subsidies, and what could be the reasons for this?

4. Cultural diversity, funded translations, and multilingualism. We aim to explore how multilingualism is represented in literary translation policies. A comparative analysis of the promotion of translation in the different co-official languages of many countries would prove interesting, as would a study of the presence of authors writing in Indigenous languages who have received translation grants. The following questions might be addressed:

- What kind of linguistic diversity do these translation policies encourage? How do translation programs take multilingualism into account?
- How do translation policies sustain or challenge multilingualism in supranational governance? What role does translation policy play in sustaining regional integration and South-to-South initiatives?
- To what extent is the translation of Indigenous or co-official languages (in the case of multilingual states) encouraged?
- How do translation policies support bilingual/multilingual literacy?
- What specific features do translators of these less translated languages espouse? Is there a greater presence of self-translation?

On a different note, we encourage conference papers considering the relationship between cultural diversity, funded translations, and linguistic justice for minority languages. Thus, we welcome conference papers on the following topics:

- In what ways do translation policies foster the availability of low-resource languages?
- What is the gap between policy declarations (e.g. official recognition) and actual translation practices in the case of minority and regional languages?
- How do translation policies contribute to maintaining diasporic languages?
- To what extent does translation policy foster social justice and language rights? In this respect, we will consider research on translation policies and Indigenous sovereignty, as well as translation policies in relation to treaties, oral histories, and archives.
- How can translation policies be used when working with oral traditions?

We invite contributors to submit an abstract of 300 words (in English, Spanish or Portuguese) to lcampanella@uoc.edu, lfolica@uoc.edu and dsanzr@uoc.edu. Please include your name, affiliation, e-mail address, and a short bio of 100 words.

Deadline: December 1st, 2025.

There will be a registration fee for presenters (€150), with discounts for doctoral students and scholars from and living in the Global South. Lunch and coffee breaks will be provided. A letter of invitation/acceptance will be drafted for visitation visas upon request.

Confirmed keynote speakers

Reine Meylaerts (KU Leuven, Belgium)

Beatriz Barreiro Carril (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain)

Alejandro Dujovne (CONICET, Argentina)

Organizing Committee (in alphabetical order): Lucía Campanella (UOC), Laura Fólica (Co-PI, CSIC), Ventsi Ikoff (UOC), Olivia Magaña (UOC), Elizabete Manterola (UPV/EHU), Diana Roig-Sanz (PI, ICREA-UOC), Iñaki Vázquez Álvarez (UPC).

Scientific Committee: Nicolás Barbieri, Elke Brems, Elisabet Carbó-Catalan, Olga Castro, Alexandre Coutoure-Gagnon, Núria Codina, Albert Morales, and Ondrej Vimr.

The organizers kindly remind all presenters that International Book Day will be celebrated on the 23rd of April in Barcelona. The organizers anticipate organizing an informal gathering with those who remain in the city, as this festive day is important to the publishing industry and the publishing field.

This event is organized by the research project Trad-Divers (Translating diversity: institutional agents and literary translation policies in Ibero-America (2001-2022) and the Global Literary Studies Research Lab (<https://globals.research.uoc.edu>) hosted at the Research Interdisciplinary Centre in Social and Cultural Transformations, UOC, in partnership with the Instituto de Lengua, Literatura y Antropología (ILLA-CSIC). We acknowledge the financial support of the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033/FEDER,EU), and the collaboration of Institut Ramon Llull, the Ministry of Culture, and CEGAL (Confederación española de gremios y asociaciones de libreros) as data sources.



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española de gremios y
asociaciones de libreros



DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DEL LIBRO,
DEL CÓMIC Y DE LA LECTURA

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