**The Art of Translation: Rethinking Implementation Theory**

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**Abstract**

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One of the more profound insights in policy studies reached in the late 20th century was the idea that no matter how hard we try to impose structure, to delineate causality or to predict outcomes, the implementation process has a life of its own. This understanding remains one of the major sources of frustration for those involved in public policy – scholars and practitioners alike.

Over the years, several scholars have written eulogies for the study of policy implementation. From their point of view, although the topic is very much worthy of study, the field of research has pretty much reached a dead end (Deleon 1999; Hupe 2014). Various attempts to organize or synthesize the many studies conducted have only served to support this conclusion (Barrett 2004; Hupe, 2014; Hill and Hupe, 2014; Lester and Goggin 1998; O'Toole and Mantjoy 1984; Robichau and Lynn 2009; Schofield and Sausman 2004). Despite optimistic attempts to show advancement in this field (Hupe 2014; Satren 2005), as in the figure of neo-implementation or advanced implementation studies, as Hupe (2014) framed them, implementation seems to still be the missing link in policy studies (Hargove 1975).

While the literature on implementation is extremely rich it seems to focus on the unintended consequences of the implementation process. This article wishes to address a gap in the literature, and focus on the implementation act itself, regardless of its consequences to the policy itself. Inspired by the Latour’s Action-Network-Theory, this article suggests a different approach to studying implementation in which it will be argued that there is no such thing as “implementation” but only an assemblage of infinite interactions with in them translation occurs. Studying implementation is, according to this, learning the act of policy translation. As will be argued this shift holds several advantages, the most prominent of them is the different types of implementation that standout from the study, which can enrich the implementation field of study.

This article consists of three sections. The first section reflects on the current state of implementation research and elaborates on the implications of the way that research has been conducted up to now. The second section elaborates on the alternative framework for studying implementation and offers an example to the proposed change in the study of implementation. The article ends with what we gained from this shift. The article is theoretical in nature, and concrete examples are presented solely for purposes of illustration.

**Implementation – A Theoretical Background**

**The agreed-upon assumptions for research**

It is custom to say that the study of implementation, i.e., the process through which policy decisions are transformed into actual practice, has been a significant research topic since 1973, with the publication of Pressman and Wildavsky’s landmark book, *Implementation*. Their study refuted the naïve assumption that policy decisions will be implemented as long as the echelon in charge of carrying them out possesses the necessary qualifications or resources. Regardless the notion that problems of implementation have been on the research and practice agenda much before this (Saetren, 2014), following Pressman and Wildavsky, many other researchers began to delve into the variables potentially affecting the implementation process. Research in this field raised four sets of questions that apparently stand between us and the ultimate understanding of implementation:

1. What is policy implementation? When does it begin? When does it end? What activities are regarded as implementation? Is it a residual concept? (Barrett 2004; Cohen and March 1986; Hupe and Hill, 2016; McGrath, 2009; Nakamura and Smallwood 1980; O'Toole, 2000). After several years of bickering it appears that many agree to the definition of implementation, as being: “…what develops between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of government to do something or to stop doing something and the ultimate impact in the world of action” (O’Toole 2000, 266). However, this definition does not completely differentiate the act of implementation as different from other concepts or actions in the policy process.
2. Who are the main actors or what are the main variables that influence the implementation process? Are they the decision makers? Are they street-level bureaucrats? Mid-level? Are they the clients? What should we focus on? The individuals? Coalitions? Networks? Collaborations? Is it a matter of understanding multi-level governance (Bardach 1996; Barrett and Hill 1984; Carrington 2005; Culpepper 2000; Exworthy and Powell 2004; Ham and Hill 1984; Hill 2003; Hjer and Hull 1982; hill and Hupe, 2013; Hupe, 2014; Koontz and Newig 2014; Lundin et al. 2007; May and Winter 2007; Mead 2001; O'Toole 2000; Peters and Pierre,2001, Riccucci 2005; Ryan 1995; Sabatier 1986; Mazmanian and Sabatier 1983; Schofield and Sausman 2004; Shea 2011). Will the shift to boundaries spanning, through a feminist theory perspective, for example, due to the changing boundaries of public administration and the entrance of the many actors to policy implementation enhance our ability to answer this question (Carey et al. 2017)? Perhaps focusing of regimes rather than individual policies? (May, 2015).
3. How should we evaluate implementation? By its process? By its outputs? By results? Can we evaluate it at all? Should we focus on what happens between the process and the outputs or outcomes? Between the inputs and outputs or outcomes? Accordingly, is implementation an independent variable or a dependent variable? (Hupe and Hill, 2016; Hill and Hupe 2014; Hupe, 2014; Ramesh 2008; Robichau and Lynn 2009; Winter 1999). Carey et.al. (2017) framed this question by claiming the implementation research is put between the expected and achieved. Can focusing on the target compliance gap (weaver, 2014) enrich the study of implementation?
4. What is the best way to study implementation? Using the policy cycle model, or the advocacy coalition model, or other innovative theoretical approaches? Should we continue to seek a good useful synthesis? Should we conduct more case studies? Should we continue to place our hopes for the future in wide-ranging comparative research based on ever-larger sample data? Should we develop the study based on the multi-layer development? (Hansfeld and Brock 1991; Lunden 2007; McGrath 2009; O'Toole 2000; Ripley and Franklin 1982; Ryan, 1995; Scofield and Sausman 2004; Wilkinson et al. 2010). How rigor and useful can the study be? (Saetren, 2014). What is the best perspective to look at implementation? Hupe and Hill (2016) offers six perspectives the research deals with implementation in relation to the policy: technical, normative, control, institutional and comparative, while pointing to the strength of each angle for research on implementation.

Reviews of the literature on implementation have been published many times (see for example: Barrett 2004; Deleon 1999; Hupe and hill 2003; Hill and Hupe 2014; Hupe 2014; Lester and Goggin 1998; Saetren 2005), and as Saetren (2005) stated, the history of the field has become “common knowledge” and now even mostly backed empirically (Saetren, 2014). Most of these reviews reveal a shared frustration that there are so many ways to approach the study of implementation, and even more ways to explain the process, and therefore see as an axiom that a grand theory of implementation is not within reach, at least not with the available findings and current research tools (Carey et.al 2017, Dickenson 2011, Saetern, 2014). Those researchers who have not given up on the study of implementation continue to grapple with three main research goals: framing a useful enough synthesis; producing a shortlist of critical variables; and conducting valuable comparative research studies (Deleon 2001; Hill and Hupe 2014; Hupe 2014; Matland 1995; O’Toole 2000). These can be from a wide perspective, such as moving from studying the implementation of a policy to implementation in a policy regime (May, 2015), or when looking at the crucial point in the process the compliance of the street level bureaucrat to the policy target. Nonetheless, the notion was still to look at the process of implementation between a policy and a result (Hupe, 2014; Hupe and Hill, 2003). These studies all convene into three main streams of implementation studies, up to day, Hupe (2014) elaborates on - the main implementation studies stream, the neo-implementation studies and the advanced implementation studies. These efforts are in thrall to one overarching question: what explains the variance in implementation processes and results between different periods of time, different policy realms, and various public bodies? (Lester and Goggin 1998).

Despite the general consensus among researchers that no new paradigm in implementation theory has evolved (Hupe 2014; Satren 2005; Schofield 2004), the research to date does display a number of broad agreements among them: the research subject (something between a decision and an output or outcome); the research goal (reducing the implementation gap); the sources of complexity (the multi variables influence); and the main actors involved and studies (the decision-makers on the one hand and the implementers on the other).

These agreed-upon assumptions have had a remarkable effect on the way research is conducted. Keeping these assumptions in mind, every researcher knows where to look and what to look for when studying implementation. Accordingly, two sets of three major questions are to be answered in learning about the implementation process of any chosen case: the first, what was the decision that started the process? What happened after it? And why is there such a difference between the initial intentions and the results? The second, what variables are prominent? How do they affect the initial policy goal? Are these variables a product of the context? And is there a difference to other contexts?

**Types of policy implementation**

A much less popular way to look at the implementation research is to classify it to types. The most common classification, that tries to capture the implementation flow, is the top-down and the bottom-up classification (Elmore, 1980, Lipsky, 1977). This categorization has been expanded and it was suggested to add multi-layer perspective (Hupe and Hill 2003) or through horizontal and vertical perspectives (Heidbreder, 2017) creating an interesting way to study implementation. According to Heidbreder (2017) these types enable policy makers to think in advance on the different conditions needed for better implementation and establishing the best mechanism for it. His unique typology raised four types of implementation: centralization, convergence, agencification and networking.

Another kind of classification tries to capture the kind of implementation flow. Matland’s (1995) well known synthesizing conflict/ambiguity model is an example for this. According to him there are four perspectives to see implementation rising from the degree of conflict or ambiguity when deciding. This resulted in four implementation types: administrative, political, experimental and symbolic.

A last interesting attempt to categorize implementation the different contexts that influence it. For example, Brussers and O’Toole (2005) connected between types of constrains and the understanding of managing implementation. Chackerian and Mavima (2001) classified implementation by the interaction with other policy issues making the interaction with other situations the basis for analysis and offering four types of implementation: synergy, avoidance, tradeoff and avoidance or synergy. Other attempts speak of the critical considerations that influence the implementers. Brower et al (2017) for example look at the connection between degree of compliance and behavior, resulting in four types of implementation patterns: oppositional, circumventing, satisfying and facilitative implementation. Howllett (2004) speaks of implementation style by tying together the constraints (resources and legitimacy) and nature of the policy targets and their implications on the choice of a policy tool.

These attempts to categorize policy implementation are extremely interesting since they respond to the complexity feature of implementation. However, these classifications up to now have been a continuum to implementation studies. In this respect they continue to view implementation as elaborated above and the goal of research narrowing the implementation gap.

**Implementation Types – From Process oriented to translation orientated**

Bruno Latour (2007) argued for changing the way social science is studied. In his suggested framework, called the Actor-Network Theory (ANT), he combines a broad definition of “actors” studied in research and a different way to assemble categories in social science. Regarding the first, Latour is known for his proposal to include non-human artifacts as actors on their own. As said, he “describes the enactment of materially and discursively heterogeneous relations that produce and reshuffle all kinds of actors including objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, ‘nature’, ideas, organizations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements” (Law, 2009, p.141). i.e., he considered all interactions, human and non-human as important for understanding the subject of interest. As for the second argument, he claimed that: “it is possible to trace more study relations and discover more revealing patterns by finding a way to register the links between unstable and shifting of reference rather than trying to keep one frame stable” (24). In a nutshell, he claims that broadening the scope of social interactions including nonhuman artifacts while tracing and re-categorizing “surprising events” can enrich our understanding in social sciences. According to Latour, while relying on critical studies, ANT is not a theory but a framework for thinking about explanations. It is sensitive to “the messy practices of relationality and materiality of the world. Along with this sensibility comes a wariness of the large-scale claims common in social theory: these usually seem too simple” (Law 2009, 142). This framework helps to learn about power and structure by considering a broader range of components that collaborate and cooperate in their creation, proliferation and persistence (Martin, 2000: 717).

Inspired by this, this article suggests learning about implementation from a different angle. Since implementation is an evolutionary process (Majone ans Wildavsky, 1984) and since it hasn’t been possible to predict this evolution it is proposed to change the focus of research. Accordingly, it is proposed to look at interactions in the policy trail; within them translation occurs, and the policy develops (Latour, 2013: 41). Studying these translations and defining the various trajectories, as Latour calls them doesn’t suggest other explanations to explain the classic implementation riddle: “why great expectations in Washington were dashed in Oakland” (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984) and what motivates compliance (Weaver 2015) but rather proposes to look at a policy regime and see what we can learn about the evolution process.

Hence, instead of implementation being studied as an evolutionary process (in an inductive or deductive manner, in any different layer of inquiry or from any chosen field of knowledge), it is suggested to look at the interactions throughout the policy regime (as defined by May, 2015), having the policy being less important and having the guiding questions be: What interaction is observed? Between what or who? What is involved? What is being translated? What has been transformed? What categories can we create for implementation from each interaction?

These interactions "translate" the policy. Although many have spoken on the impact, translation has on explaining the gap between intention and impact (Barrett 2004), this study wishes to consider translation not as an independent variable that explains implementation but as a dependent variable, hence, as it is the essence of implementation. This shifts the focus to a different direction, in which one should ask what kind of implementation stands in front of me and not only what happened, from the eye of a researcher; or “what didn’t I think of”, from the eye of the practitioner.

The word “translation” comes from Latin and it means, “carried across”. According to the oxford dictionary it means “the process of translating words or text from one language into another”, or “the conversation of something from one form or medium into another” (Oxford dictionary online). Due to the understanding that when carrying out a policy (the known meaning of implementation) it is actually carried across, i.e., it progresses as and how it is carried across the meaning of implementation grows. For example, this opens questions about cultural implementation (that reveal how context influences engagements or professional implementation (which investigates what scaling up actually needs and many other important categories.

Going back to Latour (2007) “there is no society, no social realm, and no social ties, but there exist translations between mediators that may generate traceable associations” (108). In implementation terms, according to the argument presented here, there is no such thing as "implementation" but rather an evolutionary process that develops due to interactions, within them the act of translation occurs. Therefore, it is proposed to detach implementation research from the process after an intention or decision in whatever level of government and consider implementation to be the numerous points the interaction with in the policy process.

The result of this shift in implementation study it the ability to create new and interesting categories for implementation. These categories move away from the top-down, bottom-up perspective as well as from the new multi-layer perspective and will not attempt to predict the unfolding of the implementation process since it is not in its goals. Rather, it will help understand different features that set the evolution of the policy process in motion. This way of inquiry has some crucial implications for “implementation” first as a concept, latter a “the missing link in the policy process” (Hargrove, 1975).

**A brief example on how to study implementation on “School Violence”**

According to the approach elaborated above, the research question would no longer focus on the implementation *process*, but on the *interactions* in the policy process within them translation occurs seeking for new trajectories that can teach us about implementation.

For exemplifying reasons two actors were chosen to describe implementation of the policy to reduce school violence – a former school principle and a former high rank civil servant. The two were interviewed about their involvement in the implementation of the policy over the years. The conclusions raised are not subject to a validity test to their conclusions but rather to exemplify the different angels and the possible conclusions that could be raised.

**The narratives**

The common question defined to both interviews were: “What did you do to implement the ministry’s policy against violence in school?” Along the interviews many of the decisions the ministry had taken over the years were raised, both knew the ministry’s rules in depth, but most importantly both left, pretty fast, the policy implementation narrative to other “stories” that weren’t part of the anti-violence policy narrative. These stories weren’t just anecdotes or a lack of discipline in the story telling process but rather they were foundational, eye-opening, and eventually the original implementation trial merged into other policy trails making it impossible to distinguish between them. For example, one interviewee spoke about his policy in running a school in times of terror attacks and the second interviewee spoke about his professional development while working with his peers. By the way they spoke about their relationship with their staff, their pupils, or the school parents in occasions that had nothing to do with school violence, or about the subject in relation to other policies, such as the development of their professional identity, over the years, in relation to other policies, again with no connection to the supposed central implementation process.

Both spoke of different timelines as important for understanding “implementation”. This was so prominent that at a point no decision in the policy issue, or other policies for that matter, were at the center. The narrative jumped between the past, present and future as though their importance was only their impact on the character telling the story. For example, both elaborated about their professional opinion built from the various roles they performed. Having done that, at time rationales to past events were based on future conclusions. The principle has become a principle trainer, there he elaborated on the responsibility and it articulation according to his experience. While explaining it he exemplified from his own work, leaving the listener unable to know if it is an interpretation in retrospect or not.

Last, the narrative evolved through various interactions they had over the years, some related to the issues and some not. The first interviewee naturally combined in his story, without being asked interactions with: himself, his spouse, his staff, parents, children, inspector, the circular, the neighborhood the school was located in, the shop owners around the school, the concept in reference (“violence”), the litter on the floor, and many more. The other interviewee jumped between different angles of the anti-violence policy he was part of, making the policy maker and implementer one, all subject to the different interactions that occurred to him along the way. In his narrative the interactions with non-human artifacts, such as the Director-generals' circular or evaluation reports were extremely important in unfolding the developments in the policy. Moreover, the number of interactions that the interviewees spoke about were numerous. However, what was interesting is that many of them are not in the focus of the regular policy implementation because they are rarely part of the main story. For example, the interview caught dialogs the interviewee made with himself, or in his mind with actors he did not actually speak to in that specific situation he described (but was sure he knew what they would say or do). For example, the principle described the inner space design he applied in school. While doing do so he wondered if when the ministry articulates the director’s general circular they consider the school design as a significant role in preventing violence.

To sum, the narratives built were interesting due to three features: other policies revealed as important as the policy studied, time was irrelevant to understanding implementation and the number of interactions, human and non-human, helped unfold the act of translation in the policy process, hence what happens in implementation.

**Initial Findings: Types of implementation**

Looking closely into the interactions different types of implementation pop-up. These types represent the type of interaction, the sides to the interaction, the content of the interaction and the reaction to it, hence it exemplifies what influences the act of translation that is, as said, the essence of implementation.

*Routine implementation*

Much of the implementer’s interactions are technical, repetitive and altogether simply "regular". These interactions represent the core boundaries of his role and consist of the routine work of the specific implementer. Drawing the boundaries of this type of implementation form the basis to what Simon (1960) called programed decisions. Those decisions (and actions can be added) are known only to the implementer, even though this knowledge can be partly tacit (Polanyi, [1966] 2009). Max Weber considered this situation when he analyzed bureaucratic organizations. In his thinking, the optimum organization is similar to a machine, and the organizational literature is replete with many theorists referring to this, as an administrative feature (Morgan, 1997). Whatever the name we choose, this implementation type raises what decisions and actions are natural and resemble a habit for the professional. For example, the interviewees elaborated on the school routine after a violent incidence; on the consultation forums and pedagogical forums that exist in their school; on the actions taken when they receive a director's general circular and so on.

It is important to notice that routine does not reflect acceptance, or lack of it, to any policy but rather specifies the actions that are within the routine of the implementer – his reactions, his standing operation procedures, his self-defense mechanisms and so on – that are seen in routine engagements. For example, the interviewee described how he reads reports, reacts to data and what actions he takes after. Surfacing the routine interactions reveal actors that are not always considered in designing or implementing policy. For example, the students were the most spoken actor that seemed to influence the implementers and not the policy itself. These actors were relevant when they were present and when they were not present. For examples, both interviewees spoke about what the students knew as a routine. Hence, they knew what the interviewee's response would be to a certain action and what they need to comply to even if they argue with it.

Furthermore, looking at the routine reflects evolution in the actor's behavior. Hence, routine has its effect on people, and defining these routines reveal the implementers personal "geological layers" (attitude, deviation, etc.). As the interviewee said: “you can’t always implement all of them (the director general circular – \*\*\*). You choose the places where you insist in them”.

In sum, this implementation layer characterizes what routine is made of. This routine isn't technical or known and it draws the border on the role of the professional implementer. Within this, new categories of professionalism can be raised, as well as new groups of actors that have been under the radar.

*Professional Dialogical implementation*

Interactions, by their nature are dialogical.. Professional dialogs surface different understandings of the issue or different attitudes towards it (in terms of knowledge and values).

Both interviewees put at the beginning of the interview their definition to what is at stake here. For example, one interviewee said, “We treat violence as a disciplinary issue…” The other interviewee said, "Violence is not the issue but a symptom". Obviously, both will pave different paths and will engage in different interactions, translating differently.

Much of the professional dialogical implementation reflects agreements and mostly disagreements among professionals and/or professions. These can be about knowledge and about values. Regarding knowledge, for example, one of the interviewees disagreed with the ministry's anti-violence policy that was based on the "zero tolerance for violence" program. According to him, "I am pro discretion. …this discretion needs to be professional. Our profession is education and this discretion is relevant for other things that go on in school". Moreover, even in both interviewees apart there seems to be a disagreement regarding what is at the heart of the issue - the individual and his needs or the organization and the entire community. Regarding values, the interviewees revealed what they considered as right and wrong, and allowed us a peek into the values that influence their reactions and translation in each interaction. As an interviewee said about a vandalism incident in school: “I feel that it was a complete loss of faith… someone thinks that if no one saw what he did there is no reward or punishment, there is no accountability on things. I think this is horrible.” The same interviewee also said he believes everything should be transparent. As said “another thing that is important to me is not to hide nothing, not to be ashamed to say… to put things on the table”. This was in conflict, to his staff and his peers approach and was rather surprising to them as he described. The second interviewee said that he was not willing to accept a child to school on probation. "There is no such thing. If we checked everything out and decided to accept you, you are ours ".

Studying the interactions in dispute reveal three interesting features while the implementer interacts with himself – the first reflects personal doubts, such as the manager that said, "Violence as a disciplinary matter and not as a disciplinary issue. I do not even know how to call it. … We usually relate disciple to the place between teacher and student. Violence is not categorized in this place… I cannot even succeed to remember under what definition it is included in the circular. As a disciplinary matter or school regularities".

The second are imaginative interactions that are based on a history of disputes, such as the managers that said, "Many parents were mad at me. Why did you send home a child that only cursed, my answer was that they should say thank you that I send a child that cursed”? The other interviewee said he “knows that there are many things that children don’t tell”. As he elaborated, he knew this only a few years after when the children finally shared it with him.

The third feature is completely imaginative; a result of an interaction between the implementer and his image of other actors and artifacts in his mind. For example, one of the interviewees said, he "didn't pass any training about treating violence in school… this is what years in school taught me". As a result, the interview stated is position saying you need to "understand that the deeper question is climate and school climate is a question for the schools staff and not a question of rules, regulation and circulars".

To sum, in this type of implementation the interaction raises the different attitudes and approaches to the issue at hand. These diverse professional dialogs can define different professional groups that can be defined. For example, while we speak about school leaders as one group, studying implementation can reveal different types of them: creative, novice, maestros and so on.

*Epistemological implementation*

Much has been said about the effects of different epistemologies and/or ontologies on decision-making (Tverskey and Kahneman, 1974; Kahneman 2011; Leonard and Thaler, 2008). Implementation is sensitive to this as well. As one interviewee said in a "moment of truth": his entire implementation strategy was “totally intuition. Trial and error”.

In implementation, this has several expressions, just for exemplifying purposes:

Implementation is sensitive to prior events, what is known as anchoring: One interviewee said that he truly understood the feeling of the student that suffers from violence after one time when the violence was aimed at him. The other interviewee raised a prior prejudice toward school managers (understanding prejudice can has a positive content along the negative ones). As said: "School principles that are in this job, the base for their work is the love to humans and the intention to do well. They aren’t technocrats looking for promotion or power”. This is known as representativeness.

Explanations are given in light of prior assumptions and knowledge: one interviewee connected the violence issue to the concept "responsibility". At a point, he noted, “all the school managers are responsible for all the children, in the city or in the country”. From this stand, all his decisions and actions were perceived.

The narratives revealed pieces of the "signature pedagogy" Schulman (2005) refers to, hence the interviewees. One interviewee referred to an article he read “on the connection between violence and light”. The other interviewee referred to his ability to read data and analyze it so that he is always hands on the events in school.

This opens the door for manipulations in implementation interactions and power relations. As an interviewee said that when there was a series of vandalism cases, he understood that a radical stand is in place, so he declared cameras would be placed in school so no area would be left unseen. After he described the interactions with the students, when they tried to guess where he put the cameras, not knowing he only said he would, but knew that was enough to shake the school.

In sum, each interaction has two levels of translation – the one actually happening and the one perceived by the two sides interacting. Learning of these may shed light on the different predispositions and diversions of implementers, enabling us to reflect on practices and myths in implementation regimes,

*Argumentative (Flagship) implementation*

Interactions, by their nature, are interpretive. For that matter, each interaction is built on social constructions and on power relations that characterize the context. Implementation is subject to this and learning of the interactions reveal much of the social construction and discourse. In this implementation type, we can see the implementers' notions on the society and context.

For example, one of the interviewees elaborated on the interaction he had with the school structure and how it reflected on his interactions with the students and his staff. Instead of creating a role of a school monitor / discipliner, he located his office "in a place where I see what's going on". This determined the relationships between his and other actors and between the actors themselves. For example, for the students the principle was constantly present. For the secretaries it meant much more work, which according to him "they didn't like it that they had to come to me". For him it meant that he "doesn't have a secretary that screens" whoever wants to meet with him. This in turn made him a very accessible principle. As a continuum to this, both interviewees emphasized the place of the parents as crucial for their actions. Hence, the parents and the children were the most prominent characters in the implementation process. They determined and influenced the policy more than the actual "official policy".

A different feature of this revealed social discourse and power relations among different groups in society. For example, one interviewee raised the dilemma of empowering children through loose pedagogy but knowing this can be a platform that enables violence. How do we create a balance between the two? The other interviewee saw the diversion against youth with potential to be at risk. As said: "the unbearable ease of principles that kick kids out of schools is a fundamental problem that needs to be taken care of"… he created a policy that "a principle that won't expel students will benefit". This policy was an attempt to confront the accepted policy and the accepted harmonic policymaking, that excluded and ignored the weakest students, mostly involved in school violence.

Another example was the influence the school's environment had on the policy the interviewee designed. Among these violence outside the school or terror attacks were mentioned. This made the translation sensitive to context (environment, timing and personalities).

In sum, interactions reveal power relations and reveal what orders implementers preserve and what they act to change. Studying this reveals social orders and might shed light on issues regarding policy that otherwise would go unnoticed.

**Conclusion: What Have We Gained?**

Myles Horton and Paulo Freire documented their conversations on education and social change (edited by Bell et all 1990) in a book named: "We make the road by walking". In their introduction they elaborate that this phrase is "an adaptation of a proverb by the Spanish poet Antonio Machado, in which one line reads "sehace camino al andar", or "you make the way as you go" (p. 6).

Inspired by ANT, this article suggested to study “implementation" from the "road" by focusing on the various interactions (human and non-human) in a policy regime and on the translation that occurs in this interaction on the implementer and on the policy subject. This shift results in the accumulation of new trajectories that, as argued, contribute to the study of implementation, in terms of essence and what affects it.

This shift creates implications on the essence of implementation as a concept of research and on the outcomes of the study.

**In terms of fate**: Implementation is doomed to fail because the implementation gap is a given. However, opening up research to the upsides of this gap, gives hope to future research possibilities.

**In terms of the essence of implementation as a concept:** This course of inquiry detaches implementation from rank or context and can finally seal the cap on the question: who is the implementer? and who is the decision maker?; it embraces the unspoken notion that implementation isn't doomed to happen after a decision; and it finally implies that implementation has an essence of its own and is not just a residual concept.

Moreover, this shift makes the policy narrative richer in terms of policy issues that cross it, to various actors (human and non-human) that influence it and indifferent to the policy timing.

**In terms of the research process**: Initially this approach invites ethnographic methodologies, which actually observe and record the interactions (Latour, 1987, Martin, 2000). Practically, this enables many kinds of methodologies, depending on the epistemology of each researcher: From methodologies that observe the different interactions learn about the translation in real time (as ethnography) or methodologies that learn about the interactions in retrospect (as in narrative analysis or as in quantative large N methods.

**In terms of the research outcomes:** The most significant gain of this process relates to the new implementation types that it raised. Instead of asking what influences the implementation gap this article proposes to ask what happens within implementation. In this article four implementation types were raised: "Routine Implementation", "Professional Dialogical Implementation", “Epistemological Implementation" and "Argumentative (flagship) Implementation". This can teach about professionalism, about human reaction to situations, about human filtering and framing and about social construction ad their meaning in implementing – hence, in translating policy. Moreover, within these types new implementation categories can be raised. For example, within the argumentative implementation new categories can be formed such as: implementation circles – who’s in or out, professionals vs. administration and so on. It is assumed that other types and categories will be raised with further research.

[Paul Auster](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Auster) is quoted saying "Translators are the shadow heroes of literature, the often-forgotten instruments that make it possible for different cultures to talk to one another, who have enabled us to understand that we all, from every part of the world, live in one world.”  Implementers have been the "punching bag" of all those involved in policy in theory and in practice. Seeing implementers as translators, as professional translators, that act under uncertainty and evolution conditions, lights them up and do not let them only be shadow heroes since they enable our understanding and in policy – create reality, as we know it.

This article wished to contribute to implementation studies by offering a shift in the way we perceive and therefore study implementation. The actual research is still to come. All that has been offered is a theoretical indication for research on implementation. Further elaboration as well as empirical evidence is necessary to understand these interactions and the basic elements that implementation comprises. The hope is that these studies will prove that the eulogies written for implementation studies over the years have been premature.

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