Introduction to the Narratives Policy Framework and to the research project

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Today's objectives

- Get to know The Narratives Policy Framework

- Get to know the planned research project

  Narratives for or against change: A Narratives Policy Framework perspective on policy debates in Moscow

- Clarify organizational issues

- Refine research questions for the project

What is a policy narrative?

- A narrative is a story. It includes narrative elements such as a plot, characters or a moral.
- A policy narrative is a story told about a policy, e.g.:
  - to explain why a policy problem needs to be solved
  - Why a certain policy measure is adapted to solve the problem

Ситуация на дорогах в Москве всегда была напряженной. Пробки, заторы, озлобленные автомобилисты. Власти получали претензии десятилетиями.

Когда все стало окончательно плохо? По сравнению с началом 90-х число машин в Москве и Подмосковье выросло в 5 раз и продолжает увеличиваться. А протяженность дорог за это же время подросла процентов на 30 (причем половина этого была сделана лишь в последние годы), т. е. в 1,3 раза.

Что называется, почувствуйте разницу. Именно поэтому к 2012 году Москва вплотную подошла к полному дорожному коллапсу.

Как правильно было поступить? Можно было и дальше наблюдать, как город катится к катастрофе. А можно и нужно было принимать экстренные меры.

Первым шагом стало развитие общественного транспорта. Это было абсолютно необходимо.Мы развернули беспрецедентную по масштабам и сложности программу строительства рельсового транспорта — метро, МЦК, пригородного сообщения.

Why study narratives?

- Policy actors use narratives to understand, communicate and decide about policy
  - Narratives are an important part of public policy debates (taking place e.g., in parliamentary debates, speeches, media, social media, interest groups' or activists' campaigns)
  - Narratives influence policy decision and implementation

→ Narratives play an important role in the policy process

Narratives Policy Framework

- The NPF is a <u>theoretical</u> framework to explain the role of narratives in the policy process

- It provides guidance of how to <u>empirically</u> study narratives

- The NPF is a positivist, deductive, mostly quantitative approach.

NPF assumptions

- Social constructions matter in public policy
- Narratives play a central role in how individuals process information and communicate
- Policy narratives have generalizable structural elements (*form*)
- Policy narratives operate at different levels
  - Micro (individual), meso (group / coalition), macro (institutional / cultural)

The empirical approach of the NPF

- The NPF assumes that policy narratives have a specific structure with narrative elements (<u>setting</u>, <u>characters</u>, <u>plot</u>, <u>moral</u>) → *form*

- These narrative elements can be found in texts. They can be quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. They can be compared and generalized across time and contexts.

- The NPF studies narrative *content* through (comparable) <u>narrative strategies</u> and <u>policy beliefs</u> → *content*

Table 5. Story Types by Coalition

Story type	Campaign coalition	
	Reform coalition n (%)	Conservative coalition n (%)
Story of decline ($n = 67$)	30 (39%)	37 (57%)
Story of control ($n = 49$)	46 (59%)	3 (5%)
Decline-is-only-an-illusion ($n = 27$)	2 (3%)	25 (39%)
Total ($n = 143$)	78 (100%)	65 (100%)

$\chi2$ (d.f. $= 2$) $= 57.325$, $p < 0.001$; Cramer's V $= 0.633$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 3. Narrative Elements in Twitter Messages

	Greenpeace		CASEnergy		Comparison[a]	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Test Statistic	Association
Identification of at least one character	162 (66)	83 (34)	273 (60)	185 (40)	$\chi^2(1) = 2.6$; $p > 0.05$	0.06
Hero	44 (27)	118 (73)	269 (99)	4 (1)	$\chi^2(1) = 259.5$; $p < 0.05$	0.77
Villain	129 (80)	33 (20)	32 (12)	241 (88)	$\chi^2(1) = 198.2$; $p < 0.05$	0.68
Victim	44 (27)	118 (73)	14 (5)	259 (95)	$\chi^2(1) = 40.8$; $p < 0.05$	0.31
Articulation of a policy preference	193 (79)	52 (21)	307 (67)	151 (33)	$\chi^2(1) = 10.2$; $p < 0.05$	0.12
Contains both narrative elements	139 (57)	106 (43)	234 (51)	224 (49)	$\chi^2(1) = 1.8$; $p > 0.05$	0.05

[a]Test statistic = Pearson's Chi-squared test with Yates's continuity correction; Measure of association = Cramer's V.

Gupta et al., 2018

Narrative elements

- <u>Setting:</u> the context of the policy problem
- <u>Characters</u>:
  - Villain: cause the policy problem
  - Victim: harmed by policy problem
  - Hero: solve policy problem
  - (Beneficiary: benefits from the solution)
- <u>Moral of the story</u>: the policy solution that solves the problem
- <u>Plot</u>: situates the characters and their relationship in time and space

NPF definition of a policy narrative

- A policy narrative must feature at least one <u>character</u> and contain a reference to the public <u>policy</u>.
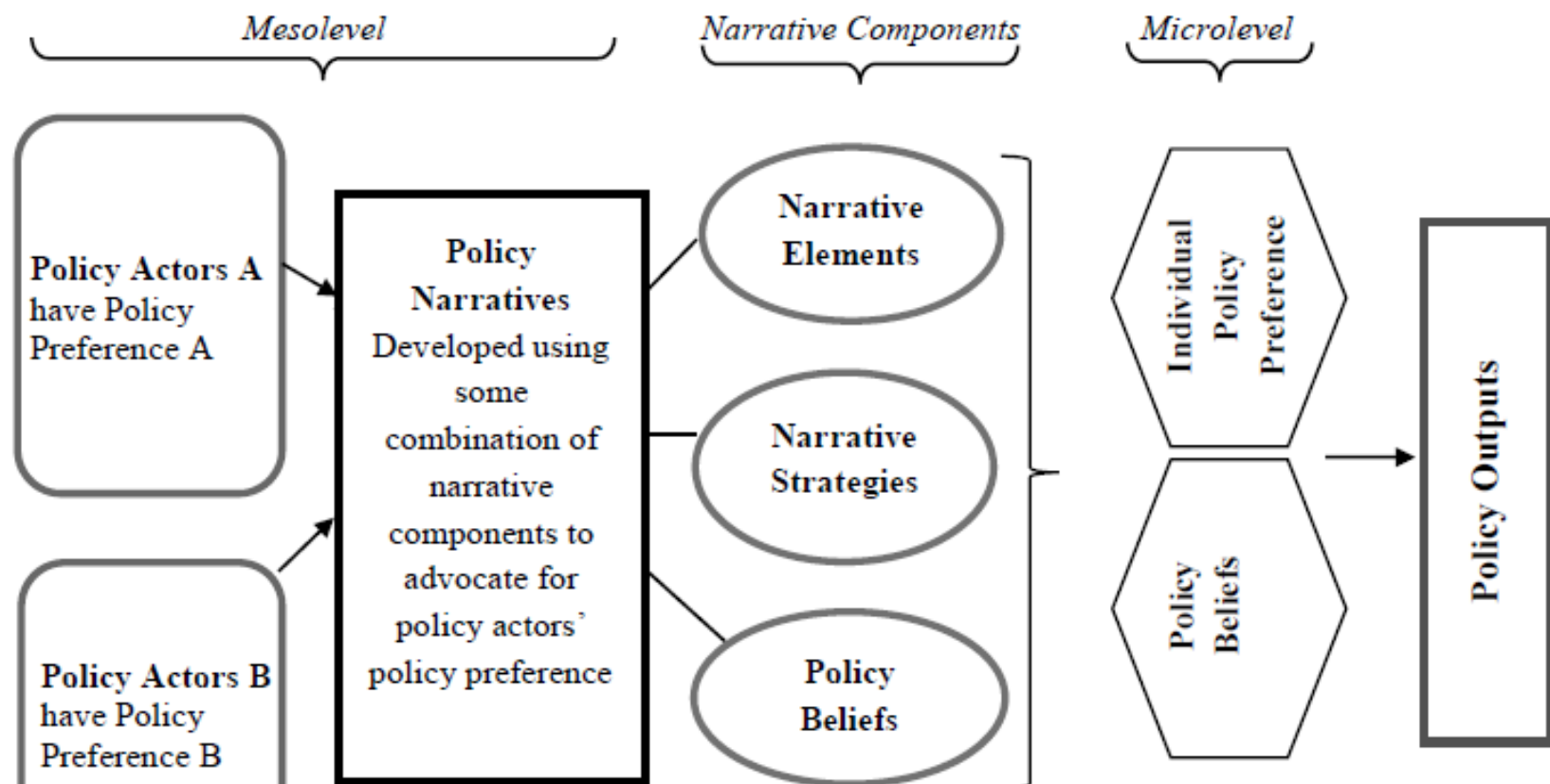
Новые, комфортные, современные…

Они перевозят пассажиров с раннего утра до позднего вечера.

Levels of analysis

- Micro level: how do individuals inform and are informed by narratives
- Meso level: how do groups of actors construct and use narratives in one sub-system
- Macro level: how narratives embedded in culture and institutions shape public policy

FIGURE 5.1 Model of Policy Narratives at the Mesolevel of the Narrative Policy Framework

Mesolevel

Narrative Components

Microlevel

Policy Actors A have Policy Preference A

Policy Actors B have Policy Preference B

Policy Narratives Developed using some combination of narrative components to advocate for policy actors' policy preference

Narrative Elements

Narrative Strategies

Policy Beliefs

Individual Policy Preference

Policy Beliefs

Policy Outputs

THE EXTERNAL CONTEXT
(e.g., legal constraints; cultural norms; political, social, and economic contexts; information; public opinion)

Our research project

- *Narratives for or against change: A Narratives Policy Framework perspective on policy debates in Moscow*

- Research goals:
  - Test to what extent the NPF is applicable in a non-democratic context
  - Shed light into policy debates in Moscow

Urban Policy

| Waste management | Housing renovation program | Transport policy |

General research questions

1. What policy narratives and narrative strategies are used on each side of the debate?

    -   E.g.: How are public problems constructed in non-democratic regimes?

2. How do narratives change over time?

    -   E.g.: Do the narratives of government and the counter narrative become similar over time?

3. Through what channels are policy narratives communicated?

    -   E.g., How are protests used to tell a narrative?
    -   E.g., How does a non-democratic regime use digital media to tell a narrative?

4. What are the effects of policy narratives?

Planned methodology

- 3 single cases and comparative analysis across cases
- Methods: quantitative and qualitative content analysis of text
- Data:
  - Text on websites and social media
  - Speeches
  - Interviews