

Call for Abstracts:
“Policy Narratives in Power Plays: Exploring the Narrative Policy
Framework’s Contributions to the Analysis of Political Dynamics”
(Workshop / Special Issue)

Topic

The Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) has risen to a new and increasingly popular theory of the policy process (Schlaufer et al., 2022). Yet while the NPF has clearly proven its potential to analytically trace and disentangle narratives, its status vis-a-vis other theories of the policy process is more contested when it comes to its explanatory force. This has, among others, been related to the missing specification of ‘power’ within the NPF. Recently, NPF scholars have started investigating the relationship of policy narratives to power. While several studies provide conceptualizations for dealing with power in the NPF (Kuenzler & Stauffer, 2022; Sievers & Jones, 2020), a variety of empirical applications focuses on policy narratives in electoral campaigns (Crow & Wolton, 2020) or on populists’ use of policy narratives (Merry, 2022; Valero, 2022).

With this workshop - and a subsequently planned special issue - we aim to bring together such work striving to conceptualize and empirically analyze the interaction of narratives and power in the policy process.

How do actors employ narratives when striving for or losing power? How is power reflected in different narrative elements? Can narratives contribute to power shifts between political actors and actor coalitions? If so, what distinguishes a power-changing narrative from a non-effective narrative? How do narratives of differently powerful actors differ from each other (e.g. government/opposition)? How do different platforms and audiences mediate the relationship? What is the role of cultural background, what can we learn from cross-national studies here?

We welcome contributions engaging with the above and similar research questions. We are especially interested in contributions employing innovative methods (both qualitative and quantitative), or engaging with new forms of narrative data.

Workshop and Special Issue

Accepted participants will be invited to a workshop at the University of Speyer (Germany), taking place on May 11 and May 12 in 2023. As the workshop is to enable an intensive scientific exchange, the workshop is planned in a physical format. Upon request, single contributions may be presented virtually.

Workshop participation is for free, participants will have to cover their own travel and accommodation costs. Upon request, the workshop organizers may cover travel and accommodation costs of Ph.D. students in need of funding.

Apart from general exchange and feedback, the workshop's goal is to prepare contributions for a special issue in an international, peer-reviewed journal. The organizers aim at having more detailed information on the Special issue (target journals, timetable) until the workshop date. While a first paper draft will be discussed at the workshop, preparing the manuscripts for a coherent special issue may entail subsequent revisions to integrate our joint conceptual discussions.

Dates and Deadlines

- December 15, 2022: Deadline for abstract submission
- January 15, 2023: Decision by workshop organizers
- April 30, 2023: Deadline for workshop papers
- May 11 and 12, 2023: Workshop at the University of Speyer

Contact details

This workshop is jointly organized by Sonja Blum (Bielefeld University/University of Hagen), Johanna Kuenzler (University of Speyer), Johanna Kuhlmann (University of Bremen), Anne-Marie Parth (University of Speyer), and Colette Vogeler (University of Speyer).

For abstract submission and further questions, please contact Johanna Kuenzler:
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References

- Crow, D., & Wolton, L. (2020). Talking Policy in Congressional Campaigns: Construction of Policy Narratives in Electoral Politics. *Politics & Policy*, 48(4), 658–699. <https://doi.org/10.1111/POLP.12369>
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- Schlauffer, C., Kuenzler, J., Jones, M. D., & Shanahan, E. A. (2022). The Narrative Policy Framework: A Traveler's Guide to Policy Stories. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 63(2), 249–273. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11615-022-00379-6>
- Sievers, T., & Jones, M. D. (2020). Can power be made an empirically viable concept in policy process theory? Exploring the power potential of the Narrative Policy Framework. *International Review of Public Policy*, 2(1), 90–114. <https://doi.org/10.4000/irpp.942>
- Valero, D. E. (2022). From Brexit to VOX: Populist Policy Narratives about Rurality in Europe and the Populist Challenges for the Rural-Urban Divide *Rural Sociology*, 87(S1), 758–783. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ruso.12410>