Theories of Discourse and Narrative: what do they mean for governance and policy?

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Introduction

In this chapter we follow a path taken by a number of contemporary analysts who have sought to understand the world around them through the use of discourse and narrative analysis. Our concern is to use these forms of analysis to cast light upon particular aspects of the world – in our case the understanding of governance, knowledge, policy and policy-making, which also relates to a growing interest in the impact of ideas on policy and politics (see Brooks and Gagnon (eds), 1994; Campbell, 2002; Finlayson, 2004). Such an approach has gained increasing legitimacy over the last decade or so and produced a body of work that challenges more long-standing approaches particularly to policy analysis but also to understanding how societies are governed (see Fox and Miller, 1995; Hajer and Wagenaar (eds), 2003).

Governance systems as learning processes, the understanding of institutional change and knowledge generation and understanding the interaction between these elements are central to the GFORS project. Drawing on the conceptual framework elaborated in Chapter 2 for understanding the interrelationship between formations of knowledge ("KnowledgeScapes") and governance arrangements it is possible to identify the key units of analysis - rule systems and actor constellations (constituting 'governance arrangements'), discursive practices and knowledge arrangements (constituting KnowledgeScapes). KnowledgeScapes represent those places and arrangements in which forms of knowledge are bundled together vis-à-vis specific issues/problems

(see Chapter 2 for more detail). Our research has assigned `discourse analysis' a significant role in understanding these phenomena both theoretically and empirically.

In order to identify, understand and evaluate the case of local governance for sustainability the theoretical framework argues for the need to deploy methods to understand the governance arrangements in practice, decision-making process(es), bargaining, power relations, inclusion and exclusion from these processes, 'knowledge in practice' and the resulting policy. The framework highlights the role of validity claiming found in (linguistic) discursive forms. Examples of how and where these might be articulated include speeches, articles and policy documents, or they may be found in debates or meetings or within keywords/slogans and metaphors. The theoretical framework argues that the two streams of investigation (i.e. governance arrangements and KnowledgeScapes) require different, albeit complimentary, kinds of methods. It is our contention that the methods for identifying and understanding them may be derived through developing an understanding of institutional `Hardware' and `Software' (Dryzek, 1996). The `Hardware' being the mechanisms and structures that surround the policy issue and the `Software' constituted through the informal practices that are often identified (or constructed) by the analyst using a combination of interviews and observation.

For us KnowledgeScapes and governance arrangements are in part the creations of discourse, therefore the action arena and action situations are also in part the products of discourse in the sense that they are in part constituted by and operate within and through discourses and discursive practices. Discourse analysis can help reveal `the how' of these processes and practices. Moreover, discourse will play a crucial role in how different forms of knowledge are assessed/evaluated, the legitimacy accorded to them and their use in the policy process. Discourse(s) will thus be a constitutive

element in knowledge cultures, knowledge milieus and knowledge networks, contributing to the shaping and articulation of KnowledgeScapes and their embodiment in particular organisational/institutional forms. On an everyday level knowledge conflicts will be articulated through discourses (and narratives) and thus affect what knowledge forms are included and excluded. Discourse analysis can thus help throw light upon the utilisation of different knowledge forms, their articulation in terms of the `knowledge flower' (see chapter 2) and thus the possibilities for the development of reflective knowledge.

The current chapter investigates the possibilities offered for understanding these issues through the use of discourse analysis, it should be noted that we have surveyed a range of potential discourse approaches that could be useful for the research. We first of all briefly discuss the changing `governance context' that has created a climate that favours the use of discourse analysis before going on to discuss forms of discourse analysis and finally set out some of their implications relevant to our research.

Governance and the Discursive Turn

In essence the argument is that a series of wider changes in the world have created what Hajer and Wagenaar (2003, p10) term "…conditions of `radical uncertainty'… " in which "…the polity has become discursive…" (Hajer 2003, p176). This has produced a situation in which it is widely argued that traditional hierarchical and rule-bound forms of decision-making (i.e. bureaucratic forms) are no longer sustainable and in contemporary democracies requires the involvement of a wider range of participants (or stakeholders), including those who are the object(s) of policy. The key driving force behind these changes is frequently assumed to lie in the impact of globalisation on society and the associated move from government to governance.

There is a widely held view that globalisation, and the associated growth of liberal market based reforms, functions as one of the, if not the, key factors structuring the contemporary world and somehow is driving the move from government to governance. For many nothing can be done about it, other than to accept it, and the only way to cope with it is through market dynamism and a process of constant adaptation to the dictates of the market. Globalisation here takes on the status of an immutable `natural force' beyond human control that has undermined the primacy of the nation state and rendered it of secondary importance. However, as Hirst and Thompson (1996, p171) point out this is a rather extreme and overstated view of globalisation. They argue that this leads to a view that "…states will come to function less as sovereign entities and more as the components of an international 'polity'." The implications of these developments for the world of politics, policy and decision-making are that national political systems have lost control over their ability to determine their own economic policy (and other policy areas) - a key element of sovereign politics. Furthermore, as Hirst and Thompson (1996, pp184-185) argue "Authority may now be plural…but to be effective it must be structured by an element of design into a relatively coherent architecture of institutions." Given these arguments we would agree with Bevir and Rhodes' contention (2006, p59) that "…we challenge the idea that inexorable, impersonal forces are driving a shift from government to contemporary governance.". Moreover, recent work by Jordan et al (2005) suggests that the death of government has been greatly exaggerated and that "…the neat theoretical distinction between governance and governance is, in reality, rather blurred..." (Jordan et al 2005, p485). Indeed, they go as far as to argue that "…governance may generate a need for new forms of government." (Jordan et al, 2005, p493).

What this brief discussion tells us in terms of policy is that there have been significant changes in the global policy environment, but that we should not over state their impact or the degree to which they circumscribe national policy systems. Thus with reference to how societies are governed it is premature to write the obituary of government. Moreover, we should acknowledge that how societies have been *governed* has always been more complex than the notion of a single legitimate centre of power and decision-making (i.e. the state) would imply (see Gaudin, 1998). There have always been multiple centres of power in any society and the relations between these centres are complex and subject to negotiation and conflict. The move from government to governance may be a useful shorthand description, but it is too simple to capture the full complexity of the situation we face today.

What is Discourse Analysis?

First of all we need to recognise that was is included in the phrase `discourse analysis' is by no means a unified body of work as those involved draw on a range of theories of political discourse. We need to bear in mind that any conception of discourse analysis as a methodological approach will always be rooted in a wider theory of discourse; i.e. an overarching framework drawing upon a particular paradigm (or *problématique*) and, often unstated, assumptions. Depending on the theory of discourse drawn upon, the approach utilised will draw upon particular units of analysis and techniques. As a result, it is possible to identify a number of analytical strategies grounded in several theories of discourse. At first glance there are thousands of books and articles advocating the use of discourse analysis, however a vast majority are rooted in the linguistic/language oriented study of what Torfing (2005) describes as 'first generation' discourse analysis. This `first generation' of

discourse analysis focuses on the semantic aspects of text in terms of its socio-linguistics.

There is, however, a `second generation' of discourse analysis that, in part, is unified by a focus on power and it is this approach we consider to be the most relevant to GFORS. This approach seeks to move beyond a conception of discourse analysis that is limited to an understanding of spoken language – in the sense of how it is used and organised or the strategies of speakers. `Second generation' discourse analysis is rooted in a comprehensive theory of discourse – or discourse theory. There are at least three streams of discourse theory that should not be confused. One, deriving from Habermas, is based on the analysis of language structures that mediate social practices. In simplistic terms this approach is based on Habermas' normative project that argues power must be eliminated in order to realise an ideal of 'communicative reason'. In contrast, discourse theory derived from the work of Foucault seeks to understand how institutions condition discursive rules of formation, truth, knowledge and power. From this position power and discourse cannot be separated as discourse is shaped by power and power shapes discourse. In a third stream of discourse theory, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) follow Foucault but problematise his notion of institutions that somehow sit outside of discourse, therefore all social practices, institutions, etc, are products of discourse. They argue that there is no distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive. In terms of power, all social relations are power relations.

While having considerable sympathy with this last point we would suggest that there are clearly important ontological and epistemological differences here. To simplify matters somewhat the most obvious division is between those who adopt an approach which asserts that the world is a discursive construct (i.e. nothing exists outside of

discourse) and those who maintain the importance of the non-discursive (material) realm (the Real) as the basis for the existence of discourse(s). The position adopted in this chapter is one which maintains the importance of the latter position whilst accepting the significance of discourse in terms of structuring our understanding of the Real, having material effects on the Real and of discursive practices becoming materialised and embedded/institutionalised, through discursive practices, in the Real and thereby changing that reality. To put matters somewhat simplistically - there is a dialectical relationship between the discursive and the non-discursive such that one cannot exist (or be thought) without the other.

We would also suggest that it would be very easy to slip into a pessimistic and deterministic conception of `reality' based upon discourse analysis, one that understands the products of discourse as an `iron cage' in which individuals and institutions have no option other than to act in a particular way. However, power always engenders resistance and domination is only ever partial. Moreover, the programmes of government and their associated technologies are rarely realised as intended. The agents of liaison and localised hubs of power central to governing have their own agendas and interests that frequently lead policies and their associated instruments to unfold in ways contrary to the intentions of central government. Policies collide with and contradict one another, quite frequently the `solutions' entailed in one policy are the problems of another. Furthermore, the means to actualise policies (i.e. the activities required to put a particular policy diagnosis into practice) are rarely self-evident, new means are often required and these frequently run into problems when they interact with existing organisations and institutions. More generally, although political discourse constitutes its own objects, knowledge of those objects and `truth', reality remains resolutely uprogrammable constantly eluding the grasp of discourse and frustrating its objectives.

What is significant for our purposes in these more recent developments in discourse analysis, particularly in the work of Foucault, is the role which discourse plays in structuring debate(s). According to Hall (1997, p44) discourse, for Foucault means:

> ...a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - a way of representing the knowledge about - a particular topic at a particular historical moment...Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language.

Nevertheless we need to be cautious over how we utilise use notions of language. As Fairclough (1992, chs.3 and 1995, chs.3) has argued language operates as both a medium of ideological conflict and simultaneously the medium in which ideology is produced and transformed; within the domain of ideology words and power intersect, construct the social world and allocate meaning. Moreover, as Fairclough (1992 and 1995) argues, discourses are not free-floating; they are embedded in institutions and organisations and play an important role in structuring the relations of power within them (see also Clegg, 1989). Discourses produce what Clegg (1989) terms rules of practice (or rules of the game) that are discursively constituted, embedded in organisational/institutional structures and reproduced, albeit in a contested and variable manner, over time. From this perspective discourse means much more than the language through which policies, associated texts and rhetoric's are articulated.

Discourse determines what can be legitimately included in and what is excluded from debates and (political and policy) practices. A discourse produces its own `regime of truth' in which knowledge and power are inextricably bound together. As Flyvbjerg (1998, p226) has clearly shown in his study of planning in Aalborg:

> …not only is knowledge power, but more important, power is knowledge. Power determines what counts as knowledge, what kind of interpretation attains

authority as the dominant interpretation. Power procures the knowledge which supports its purposes, while it ignores or suppresses that knowledge which does not serve it.

In what follows we outline strategies for discourses analysis that were of use for GFORS. However, the dividing lines between these approaches are not hard and fast with policy discourse analysts often drawing on more than one strategy. We should also point out that we give greater space to some than others reflecting our own (implicit) views on the relative usefulness of each approach to GFORS.

Semantic policy analysis

Howarth (2005, p341) describes the central aim of textual analysis in his form of discourse there as "…locating and analysing the mechanisms by which meaning is produced, fixed, contested and subverted within particular texts". In terms of the GFORS project this suggests a textual analysis of meaning(s) within policy documents, drawing on how meanings articulate demands/arguments/concepts/actors as equivalent or different. From this `policy interpretivist' position Yanow (1995, 1996 and 1999) suggests a form of category analysis. For Yanow categories entail and reflect a set of ideas about the subject in question, the role of the policy analyst is therefore to reveal these often implicit ideas embedded in governance practices and policies through a 'close reading of the categories'. In terms of GFORS this would entail a focus on the practices and categories embedded within governance forms and KnowledgeScapes around sustainability policy. Yanow (1999, pp48-57) describes the process of policy category analysis as the following:

1. What are the categories being used in the policy issue?

2. What do elements have in common that makes them belong together in a single category? Does categorical logic depend on one or more markings?

3. What, if any, elements do not fit, or does one (or more) appear to fit more than one category? Why (what are their characteristics, and how do these compare with the characteristics of the fitting elements)?

4. Do the elements as they are used in policy practices signal different meanings of category labels than what the category labels themselves appear to mean?

5. Is there a point of view from which those things implicitly asserted as belonging together are or could be seen as divergent?

Currently there is no shortage of handbooks and textbooks on this form of discourse analysis, (for example step by step descriptions of socio-linguistic discourses analysis and a checklist for interpretation strategies, e.g. Schriffrin et al, 2003), however they often remain devoid of (or silent upon) theories of political discourse central to the study of public policy and governance. Moreover, Torfing (2005) argues that using discourse analysis only as a semantic assessment exploring the meanings of words is of limited value, particularly as much discourse analysis often does not involve a comprehensive theory of power or change necessary for the analysis of political governance structures and policy.

Policy analysts also draw on policy discourse frameworks such as the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), popularised by Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995; Fairclough et al, 2006). With comprehensive textbooks now available (Wodak and Meyer, 2001; Titscher et al, 2000), and many recent examples of CDA application to cases of public policy; this approach has obvious relevance for GFORS (for example environmental resolution in Smith, 2006; health policy, Rayner et al, 2006; citizenship, Fairclough et al, 2006, for a recent critique see Collins and Jones, 2006). Analysts using a CDA framework extend their conception of discourse beyond utterances and texts to social practices; inspired by Foucault, this approach sees

subjects and objects as the result of discursive practices. Fairclough (1992 and 1995) defines practices as discursive because they contain a semiotic element. Although the theoretical categories and units of analysis differ from other policy discourse theories, the empirical methods are mostly similar. CDA research draws our attention to interpreting the meaning of speech, writing, images and gestures.

Pragmatic Policy Analysis

This approach draws our attention not only to the meaning of the text or analysis of statements but the significance of the act of enunciation or articulation of discourse. Perhaps the best example of this approach is to be found in the work of Fischer and Forester and those associated with them (see Forester and Fischer (eds) 1993), who draw upon the work of Habermas, and what has been described as the `argumentative turn' in postpositivist public policy analysis. Elaborating upon elements of this approach for use in policy analysis Hajer (2003) has articulated an approach to policy analysis rooted in a move from a classical-modernist society to a network society. This entails a much wider analysis of changes in the nature of politics and policy (indeed of the contemporary world). For instance Hajer (2003, p176) has argued that:

> …the constitutional rules of the well-established classical-modernist polities do not tell us about the new rules of the game. In our world the polity has become discursive: it cannot be captured in the comfortable terms of generally accepted rules, but is created through deliberation. The polity, long considered stable in policy analysis, thus becomes a topic for empirical analysis again. As politics is conducted in an institutional void, both policy and polity are dependent on the outcome of discursive interactions.

Within this wider conception of society Hajer (2005) has highlighted the importance of the `dramaturgy of discourse'. For example a public meeting has a *performative*

element to it, in the setting, the staging, the scripting (and the counterscript). Thus certain actors are likely to possess superior credentials and knowledge/power (or symbolic capital in Bourdieu's, 1991, terms) which will give them a greater likelihood of being able, via performative utterances[1] to name things/processes and thereby define the terms on which others participate. In terms of GFORS, this approach provides a basis for analysing meetings, public announcements or press conferences.

Narrative analysis[2]

Jameson (1989) conceptualises narrative as a key epistemological category through which we gain knowledge of the world, he argues much of what we learn comes in the form of stories. Narratives are thus a way of presenting and re-presenting the world, or particular aspects of it, in a textual form that interpret that world in a particular way. For Jameson individual narratives do not exist in isolation but reflect (and simultaneously conceal) a deeper more pervasive narrative linked to particular social (class or group) interests (i.e. to ideologies, see also van Dijk, 1995). Narratives, therefore, are never `innocent' nor are their underlying `master codes' immediately accessible. Thus the issue of interpretation is crucial to narrative analysis and it is essential to:

> ...foreground the interpretative categories or codes through which we
> read and receive the text in question...Interpretation is here construed as
> an essentially allegorical act, which consists in rewriting a given text in
> terms of a particular interpretive master code. (Jameson, 1989, pp9-10;
> see also Dowling, 1984, esp. chs.5).

This means we must attempt to identity different layers of meaning within a narrative and the ideology (or master code) that underlies it. Narratives attempt to project a particular version of reality, seeking to organise it in a certain manner whilst simultaneously attempting to mask or deny contradictions within that reality and limit

our perception of such contradictions - a form of closure or what is termed a strategy of containment. In this sense what is absent from a narrative may be as important as what is present[3] (see Gervais et al, 1999).

In terms of narrative analysis policy stories are used to make sense of organisational life and the communities those stories create. Narrative analysts ask why the story was told that way and what the storyteller means. For Feldman et al (2004) the two important anchors for analysis are opposites and enthymemes -

- Opposites – understanding what the storyteller sees as right by noting what they see as wrong, thus "…when a storyteller describes a situation, one way to uncover meaning is by looking closely at what he or she is implying is its opposite' (Feldman et al 2004, p151).

- Enthymeme – incomplete or careless logical inference – they miss out on the one hand the taken for granted aspects of the story and secondly the controversial, avoiding disagreement.

It is not about whether the story is right or wrong or factually true, but about the understandings the author is expressing in the act of telling the story. The Feldman approach is a form of a transcript analysis – they code transcripts based on stories – so these can be anything from a few sentences to two pages. Stories differ from a mere list of things that constitute a description, in that they contain a form of plot.

Three stages of policy story analysis may be identified:

1. Identify the story line, the point they are trying to make. Often revealed in a single sentence summary of the whole story. This is the central argument rather than sub-plots.

2. Identify the oppositions embedded in the story. This involves analysing what the key element of the story is not. They found that around 78% of their stories had clear oppositions either implicit or explicit in the story.

3. A logical analysis by reproducing the story in the form of 'syllogisms – (or) the individual `logical arguments that help the storyteller express the ideas of the story' – considering that some of these syllogisms will be implicitly expressed as enthymemes (the taken for granted *and* the controversial arguments excluded to enhance the power of the story).

Bringing this back to theories of policy discourse the work of Hajer (1993) is useful. For instance Hajer argues "Whether or not a situation is perceived as a political problem depends on the narrative in which it is discussed." (ibid, p44), highlighting that the particular aspects of reality which come to be defined as a `problem' are rarely self-evidently problems as such. For something to be defined as a `problem' it must first of all be constructed and articulated as an object amenable to diagnosis and treatment in and through a particular narrative that has the stamp of `authority', i.e. will be recognised by appropriate actors as an authoritative and legitimate intervention.

As Stone (1989, p282) has argued:

Problem definition is a process of image making, where the images have to do fundamentally with attributing cause, blame, and responsibility. Conditions, difficulties, or issues thus do not have inherent properties that make them more or less likely to be seen as problems or to be expanded. Rather, political actors *deliberately portray* them in ways calculated to gain support for their side...They compose stories that describe harms and difficulties, attribute them

to actions of other individuals or organizations, and thereby claim the right to invoke government power to stop the harm. (emphasis in original).

However, to define something as a problem and position it in relation to the prevailing temporary policy settlement requires the existence of what Hajer (1993) terms a discourse coalition. Such coalitions are made up of "...a group of actors [including organisations] who share a social construct..." (Hajer, 1993, p45) about the world, or some part of it, and how it functions. Moreover, they will tell similar stories that seek to account for why things `are as they are' and what needs to be done to `treat' them. Such coalitions tend to have an institutional/organisational base, be linked into a policy community and operate within a particular structure of power that frames the way in which a problem is constructed and guarantees that the coalition will be listened to. Coalitions will usually draw upon pre-existing notions of action that have attained a certain degree of 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1991), i.e. they will draw upon the way(s) in which similar problems have been addressed in the recent past or are currently being dealt with (what Clegg, 1989, terms a `mode of rationality') and which are congruent with prevailing discourses associated with a governing party.

During this process there will be a greater, or lesser, degree of 'competition' between discourse coalitions to define a problem, the outcome of which is not predetermined. In part the outcome will be determined by the ability of discourse coalitions to frame their arguments in a manner that is congruent with (i.e. speaks to) the dominant governmental and/or departmental discourse. The ability of discourse coalitions to position themselves within a constellation of competing forces will play an important role in determining their influence over the process and its outcomes. Discourse coalitions competing for influence must make calculations about how 'realistic' their aims are (what they think they can achieve) and adopt particular strategies and tactics

(how to do it). In this competitive process coalitions must also make calculations and choices about the language and narratives they use to represent their proposals, and indeed may feel 'forced' to adopt a language and narrative that may in part be dissonant with their own values; if they failed to do this they would run the risk of being seen as irrelevant and thus ignored.

During this interactive process a `problem' is constructed and defined in a particular way that is congruent with the dominant discourse, a narrative is constructed about its genesis that entails a `solution' that compliments the existing temporary policy settlement. Within the narrational genesis of a particular problem an `immanent solution' is present that complements the story of how the problem was created and contains answers to questions such as "...Who is responsible? What can be done? What should be done?" (Hajer, 1993, p45). Furthermore, such narratives seek to portray themselves as "...simply describing facts." (Stone, 1989, p282). Particular narratives attempt to (re)present `problems' as if their origins lay in uncontentious `natural forces' that must be unambiguously recognised and 'treated' in the manner specified by the narrative. By presenting a `problem' in this manner a discourse coalition seeks to structure and limit debate, to prevent a `problem' from being thought about in ways that question the narrative advocated by a particular discourse coalition. This is part of an attempt by discourse coalitions to attain a position of power and influence with regard to a particular policy field. Such coalitions therefore should not be assumed to be primarily 'altruistic formations', although this often plays a role in their constitution and operation, but should also be viewed as actors that develop and deploy strategies and make calculations about how to achieve strategic goals that are not simply reducible to the pursuit of some notion of the common good.

Clearly we have considerable sympathy with this approach, but one needs to exercise a degree of caution over how narratives/stories are used, particularly when it comes to utilising the stories told by individuals. Such an approach is useful in understanding how individuals locate themselves in the policy process, nevertheless there is a danger that we ignore how such individual narratives are related to wider social and power structures in society. Nor, as Tilly (2002, esp. chs.3) argues, do such accounts, or standard stories as he terms them, provide adequate causal explanations of social processes (such as the policy process). While personal narrative-stories are central to the ways in which individuals make sense of *their* lives, the very fact that 'standard stories' are personalised accounts limits their explanatory value with regard to social process that involve multiple actors (including organisations). Such stories should thus be treated sceptically and recognised as 'after the fact' constructions designed to explain events from the point of view of particular individuals. Thus we need to look at how stories are produced and why particular storied explanations of events become widely shared and accepted, i.e. achieve some form of predominance and become widely accepted accounts and in some instances even take on the status of 'myths'. Tilly's argument is that for analytical purposes we need to transcend such personalised narrative-stories and construct what he terms 'superior stories'. Thus:

> Construction of superior stories rests on some ability to contextualize them, contextualization requires some awareness of processes that generate stories, and the analysis of generation requires partial knowledge of the nonstory processes at work in social life. (ibid, p41)

This implies a need to relate such stories to the wider social structures and causal processes that structure events, but which are not immediately apparent to most storytellers.

Policy Analysis and Rhetoric

The focus in rhetorical analysis is on understanding the construction and subversion of meaning through the identification and articulation of rhetoric. Howarth (2005) cites the work of Skinner, who highlights the role of rhetorical redescription, as a constant endeavour to reframe issues. This begins with avoidance of making statements in our writing such as - `rhetoric and reality', which assumes an objective reality and downgrades rhetoric as the product of manipulating spin-doctors. However, to make this assumption would be a mistake. Rather we should see rhetoric as being couched in the everyday language of policy actors as they seek to make sense of their context and to define a situation – in a sense they are the `figures of speech' that we, largely unconsciously, use to structure and make sense of the everyday world. Often this takes place through the articulation of metaphor. For Yanow (1999) metaphors transfer meaning from a well-known entity to a lesser-known entity, this is about transferring that understanding to something unknown. In the case of those involved in the policy process this use of metaphor may be more or less conscious or it may simply reflect the usage of term that has achieved a certain taken for granted status in policy discourse. Nelson (1998, p.xiv) argues that the analysis of "…rhetoric may be a concern with what is communicated, how, by, and for whom; to what effect; under what circumstances; and with what alternatives."

The importance of metaphor is about understanding the role it plays in the creation, and perceptions(s), of reality; in the case of GFORS this may refer to the transfer of particular form of knowledge between governance entities. These metaphors are not wholly descriptive, but carry diagnoses and prescriptions – examples of this are `broken homes' or `welfare dependency'. The role of policy makers is to treat the offending construction and return the `malfunctioning elements' to a state of

normality. The task is to identify metaphors and then begin to derive the meaning based on the context within which the metaphor was uttered. The identification process may be made easier with computer software, such as NVIVO, where the 'corpus' of texts can be stored and categories such as metaphors coded for later consideration. In the process of understanding the meanings of the metaphor Yanow (1999) suggests analysts identify a contrasting case in relation to the metaphor – so in contrast to her supermarket metaphor – open air markets and corner shops.

> In playing out the metaphoric analysis, the analyst will discover how much of the policy issue it explains and whether metaphoric entailments are recapitulated in other arenas of policy or agency acts. The wider the 'echoes or ripples' of metaphoric meaning, the more robust the analysis and the more likely that it will help articulate the architecture of the policy argument. (Yanow 1999, p48).

Conclusion

In this chapter we have sought to identify the forms of discourse analysis that have contributed to the development of the GFORS approach to understanding the relationship(s) governance, knowledge and policy. Rather than opting for a single version of discourse analysis[4] we have sought to build upon what we viewed as the most relevant and useful developments for GFORS in discourse and narrative analysis and draw out their potential contribution for us. What should be clear is that policy is the product of a complex process, it is in part a `chance outcome' of the interaction of knowledge formations and governance arrangements that are composed by "visible" and "invisible" hands (Foucault, 2002). In this sense it may be described as a construct[5]. Moreover, policy is not free floating, indeed what is defined as policy is the product of a process in which discourse, narrative, power and knowledge are key

factors in that constitutive process, this sets limits on what can be authoritatively said and heard and indeed upon what is `thinkable'. Thus the policy process does not exist in a vacuum or start from a blank sheet of paper, it is a structured process in which prevailing ideologies set the overall framework within which different discourses and narratives are articulated by actors who are embedded in organisations/institutions seeking to advance particular definitions of and solutions to problems that are congruent with and further their interests[6]. The particular outcomes of this process of contestation are not predetermined (although we should note that nor are they `open to all' but structured by existing institutional/organisational structures and social relations) and much depends upon the calculations made by those involved and the strategies and tactics they deploy to achieve their ends. By drawing on discourse and narrative analysis we have argued that it is possible to begin to fill in some of the gaps left by traditional forms of policy analysis and provide a more systematic and in-depth understanding of the policy process.

With regard to governance arrangements the implications are that we need to look at these critically and not to take them at face value, they embody particular discourses about `what the world is like', how it functions and what can be done vis-à-vis that world. We have suggested that the limits to action in terms of governing are, at least in part, set by discourse and in particular what may be termed hegemonic discourses. Similarly with regard to KnowledgeScapes they are in part constituted through discourse. The relationships, and interactions, between governance arrangements, KnowledgeScapes and policy are structured by the `Hardware' and `Software' of these elements. While, for analytical purposes, the `Hardware' and `Software' may be identified separately in practice they are indistinguishable and mutually condition one another, in a sense each provides the conditions necessary for the existence of the

other and discourse analysis offers us a way of understanding how these structures

and interactions develop, interact and `produce' policy.

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Footnotes

[1] For Bourdieu a performative utterance (i.e. the authority to speak and name) "..is inseparable from the existence of an institution which defines the conditions (such as the place, the time, the agent) that must be fulfilled in order for that utterance to be effective...the efficacy of the performative utterance presupposes a set of social relations, an institution, by virtue of which a particular individual, who is *authorized* to speak and *recognized* as such by others, is able to speak in a way that others will regard as acceptable in the circumstances." (Thompson, 1991, pp8-9, emphasis in original).

[2] While we offer an approach to and definition of narrative that is linked to particular concepts of analysis it should be pointed out that the notion of narrative can be utilised with other concepts of analysis. For instance Bates et al (1998) develop a form of narrative that combines it with rational-choice and game theory. They argue:

> We call our approach analytic narrative because it combines analytic tools that are commonly employed in economics and political science with the narrative form, which is more commonly employed in history. Our approach is narrative; it pays close attention to stories, accounts, and context. It is analytic in that it extracts explicit and formal lines of reasoning, which facilitates both exposition and explanation. (Bates et al, 1998, p10)

[3] The issue of absences, or silences, in a discourse is relevant to the construction of `policy discourses' in a wide sense. It is only by recognising what has been excluded, as well as what as been included, that we can begin to understand the operation of power relations and the structuring of policy debates. Such an approach is similar to that advocated by Bachrach and Baratz (1962 and 1963). Their work pointed to the way(s) in which decision-making could be confined to 'safe issues', they argued that individuals or groups may exercise power by "....creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous..." (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, p948) to them. This can occur "...by influencing community values and political procedures and rituals..." (ibid, p949) to such an extent that opposing groups never even consider raising certain questions. Issues are thus excluded from the policy agenda by a process termed the `mobilization of bias'. This occurs through a process of nondecision-making whereby certain issues are organised out of politics. Their analysis implied that such processes are at work in all institutions/organisations and that any analysis of policy needs to take this into account. The problem they faced was how to study and analyse these processes, the central tenets of US political science at the time demanded that these processes be observable; ultimately Bachrach and Baratz (1970) were unwilling to break with positivism and behaviourism (see Lukes, 1974 and Clegg, 1989 chs. 3 and 4) and thus the radical edge of their work was lost.

[4] For instance the authors of this chapter do not share a common view on the `best' version of discourse analysis.

[5] However, we should bear in mind that over thirty years ago Heclo (1972) pointed out that most writers on the subject agreed the term policy referred to "...a purposiveness of some kind." (ibid: p84) and that "...at its core, policy is a course of action intended to accomplish some end." (ibid: p84). But, importantly, Heclo also argued that "...a policy like a decision, can consist of what is not being done" (ibid: p85). These quotes convey the indeterminacy that surrounded, and still surrounds, this general question, Heclo summed up the position succinctly when he argued that:

> ...policy does not seem to be a self-defining phenomenon; it is an analytic category, the contents of which are identified by the analyst rather than the policy maker or pieces of legislation. There is no unambiguous datum constituting policy and waiting to be discovered in the world. A policy may usefully be considered as a course of action or inaction rather than specific decisions or actions, and such a course has to be perceived and identified by the analyst in question. (ibid: p85)

[6] In this sense the policy process may be described, following Lindblom (1959 and 1979) as incremental. One of the problems with Lindblom's notion of incrementalism was that whilst it may

provide a generally accurate description of the way in which the policy process frequently develops, and despite attempts to use notions such as `partisan mutual adjustment' to explain incrementalism's predominance, the approach remained analytically weak. In his later work (e.g. Lindblom, 1979, 1982) there were attempts to address the inherent `conservatism' of incrementalism as outlined in his earlier work and to recognise, and understand, that `radical' change was possible. However, this was attempted without departing significantly from incrementalism and the underlying positivism of his original approach