

Strategic narratives to induce preparedness and prevention in cities – new governance tool for public action

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Aim and relevance

Separate developed policy and science discourse in Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) results in duplicating efforts and conflicting responses. Strategic narratives can be used as new governance tool to support harmonised effort for preparedness and prevention for CCA and DRR, drawing upon existing values, norms, beliefs and frames of CCA and DRR stakeholders. Several narrative constructing methods exist.

What is a narrative?

A storyline – a linguistic construction – that helps to convince a group of people of the necessity of a certain action (based on Verduijn et al. 2012). Narratives are used by people, towards other people. Narratives have been around for ages, but they can change rapidly over time.



Narratives in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

Methods to detect narratives: literature review; survey with city officers; media analysis and (expert) workshop outcomes.

Deniers:

"Climate change is not real. Disasters will not occur close to our homes."

Doomsday thinkers:

"Climate change/disasters will harm us, and we can do nothing about it."

Alarmists:

"Disasters will become more severe because of climate change/socio-economic developments, we have to take urgently new actions."

Doubters:

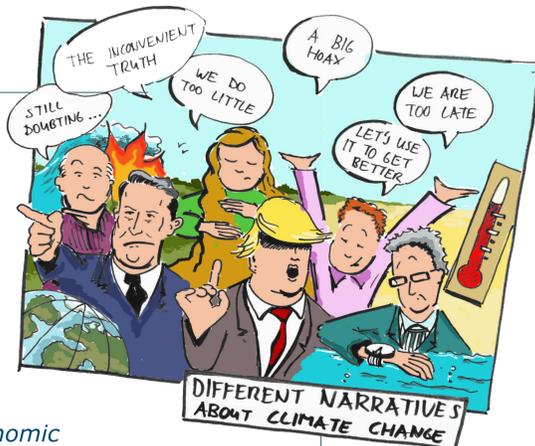
"We are not sure where or how disasters/climate change will affect us. We have to find more evidence to be more certain about what actions are needed."

Precautionary people:

"To be sure that we are protected, we should integrated climate change and disasters in every project that we develop."

Quality of life builders:

"We work hard to build quality of life. Climate change and disasters are one of the many aspects to consider."



Strategic narrative(s) for harmonized effort

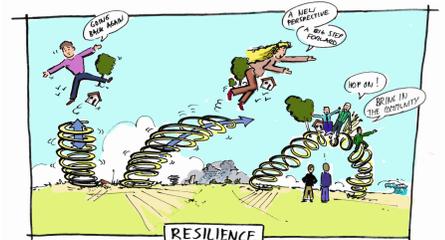
Resilience narrative as bridging narrative

"Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of our disasters. Climate change and disasters affect our society. We have to build resilience towards both".

Used by many: EU, NGO's, science But, different frames:

> Ecologists:
resilience is going back to the normal situation

> Adaptation scientists:
resilience is going forward to transformed situation



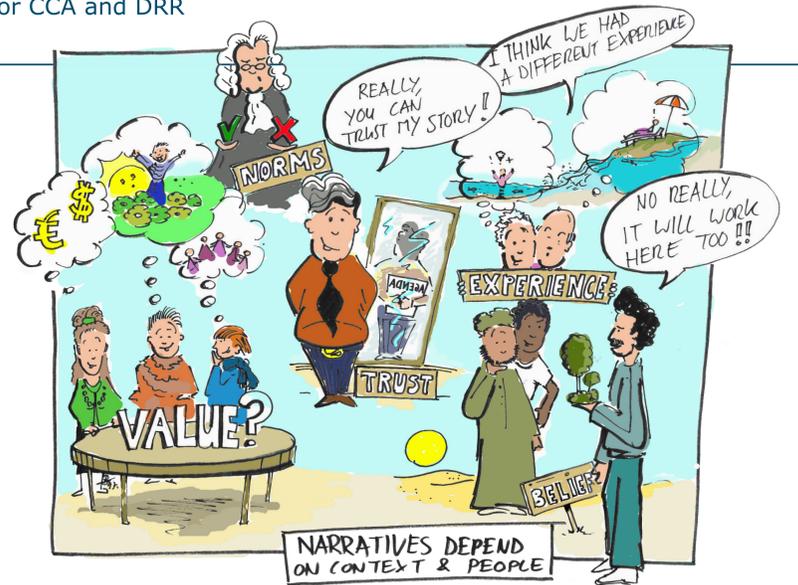
or do we speak about mechanistic resilience, community based resilience and sustainability resilience



Conclusion

The bridging resilience narrative success depends on the context and the people where it is used.

Diverging values, diverging norms, diverging beliefs, diverging experiences and lack of trust decrease the success of the resilience narrative as bridging narrative for CCA and DRR



Tools to construct strategic narrative on the spot

Sense-making tools are crucial:

- > Community of practice
- > Living lab
- > Design workshops
- > Serious games
- > Walking festivals
- > Crowd sourcing induced projects
- > Education packages for schools
- > City improvement projects with large citizens engagement

We like to hear more good experiences.

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