Appendix B

**Plot Definitions**

This appendix provides a table of definitions and descriptions relating to narrative plot.

*Notes:*

- The symbols \*\* under **Citation** indicate that the author did not explicitly include a definition.

- Bolds highlight key elements of the captured descriptions.

- All *italics* [sic].

Table 2. NPF scholarship definitions and relevant descriptions of narrative *plot*.

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| --- | --- |
| **Definitions of Plot** | **Citation** |
| Plot is the **organizing action of the narrative;** even though this may not be coded for, **plot is a key criterion for making a communication a policy narrative.** | Ba et al. (2022)  p. 711 |
| The cost-benefit dichotomy shapes the internal setting of IAM narratives by defining a plot (**the conflict between costs and benefits and their definitions and valuations**) […]  Instead, narratives have a temporal structure; they have a **beginning, a middle, and an end.**  A narrative plot **also requires causal coherence**. […]The model narrative emplots these mathematical relations into the language of **cause and effect.** | Beck (2018)  p. 931  (see section 3.1.3 Plot) |
| 1. They are stories with **a beginning, middle, and end**, […] 2. I argue that **analogies are properly viewed as a component of the plotline**. They advance a storyline by invoking past events for **which the audience already knows the plot trajectory**. | Boscarino (2018)  p. 26 (a)  p. 28 (b) |
| A storyline progressing through a clear **beginning, middle, and end**. | Boscarino (2022)  p. 286  (Table 3) |
| *Plot*: Ties characters to each other as well as the setting. Plot **organizes actions**, often familiar or broadly adopted sequences, and **explains what happened** or what the story is about. [Author cites Shanahan et al., 2018] | Brekken & Fenley (2021)  p.12 |
| A **temporal element, with a beginning, middle and end,** which establishes the relationship between the context and the characters and **structures causal mechanisms**. | Camargo (2020)  p. 2  (Box 1) |
| Plot **links characters to settings and other characters** and include some sort of **action arc**. | Chang & Kobele (2020)  p. 627 |
| The basic structures of a narrative include “a setting or context; a plot **that introduces a temporal element…providing both the relationships between the setting and characters**, **and structuring causal mechanisms.**  [Author cites, Jones & McBeth (2010; p. 340)] | Cline (2015)  p. 4 |
| […] and specified six types of plots **following Deborah Stone’s typology of plotlines**.  [Authors cite Stone, 2012; MacBeth et al., 2012] | Cristoforetti & Querton (2019)  p. 307  **\*\*** |
| 1. Plots are organizing devices that **link characters to each other via motive and relationships** and situate the story and its occupants **in time and space**. 2. Public policies always exist **because of a problem. Plots include this definition** either as a starting point or to help tell the evolution of a problem. […] In **establishing causality**, the plot must also link characters to the setting […] [Author cites Stone, 2012] 3. Policymakers work to outline **their version of the evidence related to the problem** (plot). | Crow & Jones (2018)  p. 220 (a)  p. 222 (b)  p. 228 (c) |
| A plot, which **we define as the recognition or definition of a *policy problem***. | Crow et al. (2017)  p. 630 |
| A narrative, to borrow the Jones and McBeth integrative definition, is “a story with **a temporal sequence of events, unfolding in a plot that is populated by dramatic moments**, symbols, and archetypal characters that culminates in a moral to the story.”  [Author cites Jones & McBeth (2010, p. 329)] | Crow & Lawlor (2016)  p. 473  **\*\*** |
| Plots explain **the connections between the elements of the narrative**.  [Authors cites McBeth et al., 2014] | Cullerton et al. (2022)  p. 3  (Table 1) |
| Policy stories typically come with a **causal plot**. Plots can be coherent – with **a clear beginning, middle, and end**, and **attendant causal and temporal connections** – but they may exist only in fragments where causation is non-linear, segmented, even incoherent. When present in its most coherent form, the plot is **the set of cause-and-effect mechanisms connecting past to present and future**.  Plot\_ **Causal story linking past-present-future**.  [Author cites Shanahan et al., 2017] | Dunlop et al. (2021)  p. 369  (also see Table 1) |
| A plot that **introduces a temporal element, providing the relationships between the setting and characters and structuring causal mechanisms**. | Dupuis (2019)  p. 317 |
| The plot **connects the setting to the characters and the characters to one another**, **spelling out the causal arrangements of the policy problem**. Plots describe how the villain harms its victims, but they are also instrumental in explaining “**how blame is assigned to the villain** […]” [Authors cite Gray & Jones, 2016, p. 197]  Based on this rationale, **policy narrative plots make it possible to understand the causal mechanism** through which a government makes sense of its environment (setting), attributes roles to key actors (characters), and identifies policy solutions for implementation (moral). | Esposito et al. (2021)  p. 4 |
| Plot: This is an **arrangement of events that establishes the relationship between characters** and situates them within a particular setting. | Flores et al. (2023)  p. 125 |
| 1. At the heart of the narrative is the intrigue, or plot, **a tension between the different actions, actors, and events which drive the account**. 2. For the NPF, the notion of *plot* encapsulates **the temporality of the narrative**, and its most important aspect is **the interaction between characters and events**. 3. […] The three dynamic components, that is ***complication****,* ***re-action***, and***resolution***, constitute the plot. | Fløttum & Gjerstad (2017)  p. 3 (a)  p. 5 (b)  p. 6 (c) |
| 1. Plots link policy narrative elements by **establishing relationships between characters, their policy settings, and the moral of the story**. 2. Plots affect **how blame is assigned to the villain**, what actions are needed from the hero and what moral is to be gleaned from the story. | Gray & Jones (2016)  p. 196 (a)  (Table 1)  p.197 (b) |
| The plot serves to **link characters with one another** and with the settings, and **assigns blame through asserting a certain causality and intention**. | Guenduez & Mettler (2023) p.5 |
| Plot: **organisiert die Handlung**  *Plot: organizes the Action*. | Hildbrand et al. (2020)  p. 184  (Tabelle 1) |
| A plot typically consists of a **beginning, middle, and end, connecting the characters and setting in various possible ways**. | Honeck (2018)  p. 136 |
| Policy problems play an important role in a policy narrative because **identifying a policy issue helps establish the plot**. | Huda (2018)  p. 54 |
| Plot (**arc of action**) […]  The **policy problem helps establish the plot** and can help narrow the scope of proposed solutions. | Huda (2019)  p. 526 |
| 1. Evidence was used to portray heroes, villains, victims, and beneficiaries and since **plot situates characters in time and space**, there is some support for **situating evidence within plot**. 2. Setting and plot in policy narratives discuss **physical, temporal, or governmental aspects of policy problems** and **causal relationships underlying the problem** (Lawlor and Crow, 2018) 3. The **link between risk and plot** may also potentially be explored using Stone’s (1997) **causal stories**. 4. Furthermore, the **plot in policy narratives also includes *evidence* pertaining to the human ability to address the policy problem** such as existing policies or those that could be implemented to mitigate *risk* […] | Huda (2021)  p. 209 (a)  p. 210 (b)  p. 214 (c)  p. 218 (d) |
| A plot that **ties the characters with the setting** and usually **assigns blame and/or causality**. According to Stone (2012), common policy plotlines include the *story of decline*, *conspiracy*, *blame the victim*, and *stymied progress*, among others. | Jones (2014a)  p. 8 |
| **Each story has the same stymied progress plot** where some progress has been made, that progress has been stalled by nefarious interests (other CT types), and there is a hero directing us toward a solution. | Jones (2014b)  p. 652  **\*\*** |
| The plot **situates characters within time and space**; **establishing relationships between characters and their settings**; and often has a **beginning, middle, and end**. | Jones (2018)  p. 728 |
| The plot of a narrative **positions the characters within the setting across time and space, establishes relationships between characters, and determines what elements of the setting are active**, what elements are dormant, or altogether left out. | Jones & Crow (2017)  p. 3 |
| The plot **temporally maps the relationships characters have with each other as well as the relationship between characters and the setting**. It **often contains causal relations** such as ‘this happened because of that’ or ‘if we do/don’t do this, then that will happen’. | Jones & Radaelli (2015)  p. 4 |
| A plot (**beginning, middle, end**). | Jones & Song (2014)  p. 449 |
| Policy narratives consist of plots that **define a problem, assign blame**, and propose a solution. | Kear & Wells (2014)  p. 41 |
| A plot typically has a **beginning, middle, and end**—and serves to **connect characters to each other and to the policy setting**  [Authors cite Jones, McBeth, and Shanahan, 2014] | Knackmuhs et al. (2020)  p. 294 |
| Furthermore, narratives often include a plot that **establishes a temporal and causal order** […]  [Author cites Shanahan et al., 2017] | Kuenzler (2021)  p. 410 |
| A plot provides the “arc of action” (Shanahan et al., 2017, p. 176), for example, by “**affect[ing] how blame is assigned to the villain**, what actions are needed from the hero and what moral is to be gleaned from the story” (Gray & Jones, 2016, p. 197). A plot thus “**situates the characters and their relationship in time and space**” (Shanahan et al., 2017). | Kuhlmann & Blum (2021)  p. 280 |
| 1. A plot, which is the **recognition of a** **policy problem**. 2. The **plot includes a discussion of causality related to the problem** (Stone, 2012), including whether the problem is to blame on specific actors. | Lawlor & Crow (2018)  p. 846 (a)  p. 849 (b) |
| Policy narratives are stories with a policy stance: “they have a setting or context; **a plot with barriers to overcome**; **characters that cause the problem**, suﬀer from it or ﬁx it; and a moral which provides the policy solution.” (Jones & McBeth (2010, p. 329) | Lebel & Lebel (2018)  p. 165 |
| 1. In NPF, a narrative is a story that can be decomposed into components – e.g., it could be **a temporal order of events unfolding** along a plot with the case characters (primarily, *villain*, *victim* and *hero*) **which reveals how the narrators interpret the cause and consequence** of their own or others’ lived experiences […] 2. Argumentation with plot, **in which there are five specific plots**: Story of Decline, Stymied Progress, Change Illusion, Story of Helpless & Control, and Conspiracy […] [Author cites Stone (2012)] | Lin & Chung (2020)  p. 3 (a)  p. 7 (b) |
| Plot focuses on the content of the story and **helps to organize actions**. | Mainenti (2018)  p. 393 |
| Both river narratives were constructed **using a “story of decline” plot** as articulated by Stone (2002: 138). | McBeth et al. (2016)  p. 429  **\*\*** |
| 1. Within the NPF, a policy narrative is deﬁned as a form of communication having some combination of core elements: a setting (situated in a policy context), characters (heroes, villains, and victims), **a plot (the relationship between characters)**, and a moral (a policy solution) (McBeth et al., 2014a: 228). 2. Each narrative was designed **using a “story of decline”** (Stone, 2012: 160-165) plot. The plot was held constant with only variation in characters between the two narratives. | McBeth et al. (2017)  p.178 (a)  p. 182 (b) |
| […] a plot (**beginning, middle, and end**), […] | McBeth & Pearsall (2021)  p. 881 |
| First, their plot **follows a temporal sequence of events** (McComas and Shanahan 1999) and is one of a “**stymied progress story**” (Stone 2002) | McBeth et al. (2010)  p. 404  **\*\*** |
| Policy narratives contain a policy plot or story line.  Examples of such plots include the “**story of decline,” “stymied progress story,” and “helplessness and control**” (Stone, 2012, 160–168). **A policy plot leads the reader to a logical conclusion (that sets up a solution).** | McBeth et al. (2013)  p. 145 |
| Plot\_\_\_ Clear **beginning, middle, and end**. | McBeth et al. (2012)  p. 163 (Table 1) |
| 1. The plot, therefore, was more so in the genre of a group quest of self-discovery than an actor-driven, good versus evil action drama. **We use the term *narrative theme* to identify the tensions aligned with each chapter.** 2. Readers will notice that we frame the case’s overall narrative as a system composed of the specific **narrative themes that emerged from each chapter of the plot**. | McGough et al. (2018)  p. 8 (a)  p. 12 (b)  **\*\*** |
| A plot, which is used for **defining a policy problem**. | Mishra (2020)  p. 90 |
| […] and the plot, **which is the causal relationship between all the elements**. | Mosley & Gibson (2017)  p. 702 |
| 1. At its simplest a narrative is a story – **a temporal sequence of events**, usually with a central character or characters; a plot **linking events, settings, and characters together**. (a) 2. Plot/temporal elements \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   **A beginning/middle/end** or a historical account. | Nisbett (2017)  p. 5 (a)  p. 7 (b) |
| Drawing upon Shanahan and others (2013, 459), defining plot of the narrative as, “**the device linking the characters, evidence (setting), causal mechanism, and moral of the story**.” | O’Donovan (2018)  p. 538 |
| 1. NPF defines a plot as the **relationships between the story’s characters and their actions**. These plots and characters can be understood as the variables within a claim. 2. The last step in **framing the plot analysis involved categorizing each plot as a *threat plot* or an *opportunity plot*** [sic] […] | O’Leary et al. (2017)  p. 33 (a)  p. 33 (b) |
| As in literature, a plot should have a **beginning, middle, and end** and **establish relationships between setting and characters**. The plot unfolds in **various depictions of causes, effects, and solutions** with identification of the relatedness between variables. | Olofsson et al. (2018)  p. 958 |
| 1. a plot that **introduces a temporal element (beginning, middle, and end**). 2. The plot provides the **main structuring and causal relationships between the component parts** of the narrative.   [Author cites Jones & McBeth, 2010] | Palm et al. (2022)  p. 368 |
| A plot **connects the characters to the policy setting and to each other** […] | Peltomaa (2018)  p. 4 |
| **Plot provides a temporal line of reasoning in which the other components interact**. For example, plot has been conceptualized in the past **through Deborah Stone’s (1989) storylines** (McBeth et al., 2014). | Peterson (2023)  p. 60 |
| The PLA policy narratives employ the aforementioned characters **to enact a larger plot**. […] Additionally, **important to the overall PLA narrative plot, most of the narratives engaged in “problem surfing”** (Boscarino, 2009), which occurs when proposed policy solutions are tied to other problems. | Price (2019)  p. 527  **\*\*** |
| When this happens, what are the narrative features of IAs, specifically **causal plots**, doomsday scenarios, **dramatization**, heroes and villains, moral reasons for action and other elements associated with narrative policy analysis? | Radaelli et al. (2013)  p. 506  **\*\*** |
| 1. We argue that plots in policy narratives can be studied as examples of policy image making or **problem definition, considering that causal connections** that are highlighted in crafting a policy image […] are consistent with NPF theory description of the structural element of the plot. 2. Plot is the **story that connects structural elements of a narrative**, typically **including a dramatic arc**. 3. Plots and narrative strategies were **coded according to Shanahan et al.’s (2018) codebook which presents five common plots** [Stone’s Story typologies] and to Stone’s (1989; 2012) **four causal mechanisms** which are commonly utilized in NPF as narrative strategies templates.   [Author cites Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Jones, 2018, Jones & McBeth, 2010; Shanahan et al., 2018] | Rodrigues Neto & Barcelos, (2020)  p. 1636 (a)  p. 1637 (b)  p. 1638 (c) |
| 1. The plot of a policy narrative is **a connective, time-oriented, linkage** between characters and the setting. 2. […] in order to **capture plotlines with a future orientation (i.e., may soon), we needed to add a dimension of time** on which to mirror these plotlines. This process allowed us to describe new *plot* types, including the ***Story of Future Decline***. | Ruff et al. (2022)  p. 514 (a)  p. 518 (b) |
| A policy narrative’s **plot ties the various narrative elements** **together**. […]  Similarly, **the NPF assumes policy narratives to contain mainly two broad types of plots based on work by Stone** (2002): a *plot of decline*, which spins a tale of a deteriorating situation to expand a policy conflict, and a *plot of control*, constructed to contain a policy conflict.  [Author cites Shanahan et al., 2013] | Schaub (2021)  p. 788 |
| Finally, the plot is the **story device that links the characters, the setting, and the moral of the story,** **usually through a causal relationship**. | Schlaufer (2018)  p. 92 |
| **Thus, a problem has been defined when its causes have been identified and described.** This unfolds through the manipulation of the role of different characters, played out against one another causing harm and creating heroes, villains, and victims. In other words, **causal mechanisms are theoretical abstracts conveyed through the roles that different characters play that work to assign blame**. | Shanahan et al. (2014)  p.72  **\*\*** |
| A story device **linking the characters, evidence (setting) causal mechanisms and moral of the story (policy solution)**. Common plots include decline and control. | Shanahan et al. (2013)  p. 459  (Table 1) |
| Like any good story, there are elements that make the account compelling: a plot, characters and a moral (Jones & McBeth, 2010). **Stone** (2002, 138-45) **outlines several different policy plots** (e.g. **“story of decline” and “stymied progress”**) that include characters […]. | Shanahan et al. (2011)  p. 374  **\*\*** |
| […] and *the plot* (which **lays out the interactions over time between characters and the setting**). | Smith-Walter et al. (2020)  p. 650 |
| The **journey or overview of the sequence of events that the story will take its audience through** (Mayer, 2014). It also emphasizes the **temporal element of policy narratives as stories with a beginning, middle, and end** (Jones & McBeth, 2010). | Soremi (2019)  p.199 |
| Third, a plot **acts as a mechanism to connect all narrative elements.** It is often interpreted through generic plotlines defined by Stone (2012). | Stephan (2019)  p. 8 |
| As for the plot, namely, **the story device that describes causal relationships between the setting, the characters and the moral of the story** (Schlaufer, 2018), no coding was conducted. The plot was instead inductively reconstructed through an in-depth analysis of the coded text extracts. | Terlizzi (2021)  p. 755 |
| 1. These stories consist of various narrative elements such as a setting, a plot **describing relationships between story characters** […] 2. Characters and their interactions **are located in time and space** (*plot*) | Tosun & Schaub (2021)  p. 346 (a)  p. 349 (b) |
| The plot **connects the characters; describes their actions in a storyline**; **and focuses on control, decline, or stymied progress**. | Uldanov et al. (2021)  p. 437 |
| Plot: understood as elements of the story that connect the characters to each other, or **organizing devices that link the characters to each other via motive and relationships** and situation the story and its **occupants in time and space**. [Authors cite Shanahan et al., 2017] | Velasco González & Ruano (2021)  p. 5 |
| A story device **linking the characters, evidence (setting), causal mechanism, and moral of the story (policy solution).** Common **plots include decline and control** (Stone 2012)**.** | Veselková (2014)  p. 294  (Table 1) |
| 1. […] how **specific challenges could be tackled** (plot) 2. For them, climate change follows an **accidental plot** […] 3. It also reflects what Stone (1989) **calls intentional causal stories, and the importance of this plot type,** as identified by Soremi (2019), because these **narratives emphasize a set of purposeful actions with intended consequences**. | Wehde & Perreault (2022)  p. 47 (a)  p. 48 (b)  p. 49 (c)  **\*\*** |
| All text segments describing **a process** or evolution **leading from a stated problem to the suggested solution** were coded as plot. | Weiss (2020)  p. 111 |
| 1. Third, a *plot* is used to relate the identified agents to each other and the relevant setting, based on a **narration of struggle, domination and liberation, competition or manipulation**. 2. The **plot unfolding through this narrative contains negative, even dramatic expressions** for the effects of climate change […] | Wendler (2022)  p. 69 (a)  p. 75 (b) |
| A *plot* **that weaves together the setting with characters and typically attributes responsibility/causality to damages usually associated with an aggrieved party or resource**. Common plotlines associated with policy **include stories of decline, conspiracy, and blame the victim** (Stone, 2011). | Zanocco et al. (2018)  p. 980 |