NARRATIVES4CHANGE

RESEARCHBRIEF 1

Narratives4Change

ABOUT NARRATIVES4CHANGE

The Narratives4Change project is a 36-month research investigation consisting in two main phases: data collection and analysis in an outgoing phase (outside of Europe), and implementation of results in a return phase (in Europe). The first 24 months of the project (outgoing phase) were carried out at the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), and the last 12 months (return phase) took place in Europe, at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB, Barcelona, Spain).

The main goal of the Narratives4Change project is to study how the public narrative framework is being used for the development of individual and collective leadership in different areas of action (e.g.: advocacy/organizing in education, health, politics, etc.) and cultural and geographical contexts, to better understand how it enables individuals' agentic action and their capacity to develop agency in others, enhancing organizational capacity. Doing this could in turn inform a twofold objective. First, to better understand how the use of public narrative impacts on individuals' interpersonal relationships by means of enabling agency. And second, to explore how it impacts on creating new social realities.

Drawing on the results obtained in the research phase at the HKS, the project seeks to contribute with novel knowledge on how public narrative can be adapted to the European context. More specifically, Narratives4Change aims at findings ways to inform how to advance in better organizing the Roma women movement in Europe, and in Spain.

INTRODUCTION

What is Public Narrative?

Public narrative is a way of linking the power of narrative to the work of leadership by learning to tell a *story of self*, *story of us*, *and story of now*. Leadership is defined as "accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty." Narrative is a way we can access the emotional resources embedded in our values to transform threats to which we react fearfully into challenges to which we can respond hopefully and engage. Narrative is grounded in specific story moments in which a protagonist is confronted with a disruption for which s/he is not prepared, the choice s/he makes in response, and the resulting outcome. Because we can identify empathetically with the protagonist, we experience the emotional content of the moment, the values on which the protagonist draws to respond. The "moral" of the story we learn, then, is in this emotional experience, a "lesson of the heart" rather than only a cognitive "lesson of the head." We can thus call on this experience as a "moral resource" when we must face disruptions endemic to the human experience.

As we begin to nest these particular story moments (beats) of our own within broader story moments (scenes) and these within broader moments (acts), we construct our own story, choices we made that mattered, and the values these choices express, a "story of self." We can also join with others in our family, community, nation, and faith to construct similar "stories of us" based on shared story moments. And we can interpret the present moment as one of urgent disruption to which we can respond drawing on our sources of hope, solidarity, and self-worth, rather than react influenced by our fears, isolation, and self-doubt. The former turns it in a challenge with which we can engage. The latter turns it into a threat from which we flee. Leaders can thus mobilize the emotional content of "public narrative" to communicate *why* it matters enough to us that we can do the cognitive strategizing to figure out *how*.

Marshall Ganz (Rita T. Hauser Senior Lecturer in Leadership, Organizing, and Civil Society at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University) and his collaborators began developing a pedagogy of this practice in 2006 and since then they have adapted it in online and offline courses at the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) and in workshops, projects, and campaigns such as the 2008 Obama for President campaign. Between 2006 to 2016, at least 32,184 people participated in 448 workshops in some 25 countries including Denmark, Serbia, Jordan, India, Viet Nam, China, Japan, Australia, and Mexico and in domains as distinct as health care, education, politics, religion, and advocacy.

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About Narratives4Change

In its outgoing phase at the Harvard Kennedy School, Narratives4Change developed two interlinked studies.

First, an **online questionnaire** aimed at mapping and capturing how the public narrative was being used, and evidence of its impacts.

Second, **and three case studies** of campaigns organized or supported either by civic organizations or public institutions that have used public narrative in their implementation. Three were the main criteria for the selection of the case studies. First, having some previous evidence of their impact when using public narrative. Second, cases that make it possible to be studied in light of the field of gender, education, or health. And third, geographical and cultural diversity. Selected cases were the following:

Case Study 1. The "Stand Up with the Teachers" campaign (QMM) in Jordan, led by female teachers employed in private schools, and supported by the Ahel organization

Case Study 2. A study on the effectiveness of Public Narrative as a leadership development approach for Patient Leaders in the in the **"Maternity Voices Partnership"** program, supported and facilitated by the organization **Horizons-English National Health Service (NHS)**

Case Study 3. The use of public narrative by the civic organization **"We The People Michigan"** (USA) as way to facilitate team formation in leadership development and community organizing with the **"Drive Michigan Forward"** coalition

In its return phase at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Narratives4Change conducted research with Roma women member of Roma organizations, and focused on researching on Roma women leadership, and to what extent there were elements of the public narrative framework that could be adapted and capitalized in the leadership development promoted by specific grassroot Roma women civic association in Spain.

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EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

A) AN OVERVIEW OF THE 2020 PUBLIC NARRATIVE IMPACT SURVEY

Data

— Of the 5,274 surveyed, **1,111 individuals** responded for an overall rate of 21.1%.
— Of these 1,111 individuals, **66.7%** learned public narrative in online or offline semester-length **courses** taught by Ganz at the HKS. The remaining **33.3%** learned public narrative in online or offline **workshops** of one to three days
— **Five domains of usage** were defined in the survey as follows:
    1. Using public narrative **within the workplace with colleagues,** co-workers, staff, employees, and volunteers
    2. Using public narrative **within the workplace with "constituents":** students, patients, beneficiaries, members, clients, etc.
    3. Using public narrative **to motivate participation** in a civic association, professional association, trade union, political campaign, social movement, **or other forms of public engagement**
    4. Using public narrative **in a campaign**: data solicited in this section focuses on specific campaign usage.
    5. Using public narrative **with family and friends**

Demographic profile of survey respondents

— **Six out of ten** public narrative users are **women**
— Almost **60% of respondents hold a graduate degree** (e.g., master's degree), and almost 20% hold a terminal degree (e.g., MD, JD, PhD).
— Ages varied widely, between 19 to 81 years old. The most represented **age group** was between **31 and 40 years**.
— Most of our respondents are **English native speakers (77.3%), *but…*** respondents also spoke other languages such as Spanish (10.1%), Arabic (4.7%); French (2.5%), Chinese (1.9%), Hindi (1.9%), Serbian (1%), and Japanese or Urdu (0.7%).

Public narrative is used across diverse fields of practice, most of which are "values" based

— 40.4% of respondents operate in the field of **education**
— 31% in **advocacy/organizing**
— 26.9% in **government**
— 21.7% in **politics**
— 19% in **business**
— 14.1% in **social services**
— 13.9% in **health**.
— Less than 7% of respondents operate in the field of culture/recreation, labor, religion, and the military.

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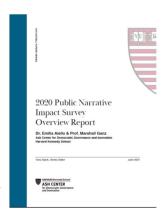
Public narrative is used across five domains

— **Workplace (co-workers)** |Some **75.5%** of respondents use public narrative **with co-workers** in their workplace.
— **Workplace (constituents)** | **68% of respondents** use public narrative **within the workplace** with constituents.
— **Public engagement** |Almost half of all respondents, **44.6%,** also use public narrative **to motivate participation in a civic association**, professional association, trade union, political campaign, social movement, or other civil society formation.
— **Family and friends** |More than half, **55.3%,** of respondents use public narrative **with family and friends.**
— **Campaigns** |Only **26%** used public narrative **in a campaign**, reflecting the fact that far fewer of the respondents were involved in campaigns at all.

Public narrative is used in diverse ways, most significantly in interpersonal communication When used in the public sphere public narrative is used in diverse ways, but contrary to the expectation that it is a form of public speaking used mostly to communicate among large audiences, it is especially useful in proximate interpersonal communication encounters such as one-on-one meetings, at work with colleagues, and teams in small groups.

Qualitative research on public narrative usage in the broader Narratives4Change project revealed the same pattern Leaders and organizers are using public narrative to better communicate among themselves and to establish more solid interpersonal relationships based on trust and solidarity. This may contribute to the literature that explores sources of social identity, relational leadership, leadership development, and team effectiveness; the impact on group performance of distributed-coordinated structure; or as posed by the new psychology of leadership, the need for paying more attention to the process of leadership effectiveness as a phenomenon rooted in a sense of shared group membership rather than an individual one.

Public narrative is used in campaign across issue areas Although respondents found public narrative useful across a wide range of issues that campaigns address, usage does seem to cluster in particular areas. While this can be an artifact of who learns public narrative in the first place, this does demonstrate a useful "portability" of the public narrative framework across issue domains. We asked respondents who used public narrative in campaigns to identity in which societal fields it was used. A list of 18 different societal fields were offered , and an "other" open category was added. Most of these societal fields are related to the UN 2030 SDG. According to respondents, the top three societal fields which the campaigns intended to impact are (1) democracy, political reform, and corruption; (2) voting rights, participation, and civic engagement, and (3) electoral politics and campaigns.

2020 Public Narrative Impact Survey. Overview Report. *Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. Harvard Kennedy School* https://ash.harvard.edu/occasional-papers-

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B) AN OVERVIEW OF THE CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1. The "Stand Up with the Teachers" campaign (QMM) in Jordan, led by female teachers employed in private schools, and supported by the Ahel organization

How is Ahel using public narrative for the development of individual and collective leadership capacity in the framework of the Qom Ma'al Muallem Campaign (QMM)? In what ways is this contributing to develop collective organizational capacity –build community and build power?

Methods

Data was collected from different sources. Qualitative online fieldwork was conducted between March 2020 and August 2020 with female teachers of different ages (ranging from 26 to 50) core activists of the campaign; coaches and members of Ahel who have been involved at different moments of the campaign; and also o*ther stakeholders of the campaign*. Secondary documentation related to the campaign, the community organizing methodology used by Ahel, and the situation of female workers in private schools in Jordan was screened and reviewed. Finally, notes and materials related to workshops led by Ahel for coaching the campaign in different moments, photos shared by members of the campaign when celebrating popular education circles, as well as social media data was also gathered, reviewed and analyzed.

Findings

Findings show that in the QMM campaign public narrative was used either *internally* (with teacher' members of the campaign, when working with each other); or *externally* (used to advocate for constituents' right at the public sphere, beyond the QMM leadership team). In turn, two other axes of analyses were defined: (*a*) *Settings of usage:* those settings in which public narrative was coached and used; *(b) Impacts achieved:* public narrative as a leadership practice that either contributes or mediates impacts at four different dimensions: Individual; QMM as a team, and as an organized community of actors; Sociocultural, and Institutional. Some of the impacts observed at the Individual and at the team level are outlined below.

At the Individual level we observed that public narrative contributed to the enhancement of subjects' agentic capacities and promoted leadership authenticity. Also, the use of public narrative enhanced members of QMM daring to take the lead and to speak up at the public sphere and increased individual conscientization/awareness. The public narrative pedagogy was also used by teachers with family members (e.g.: for solving conflicts, settings rules, etc.). As for the impacts at the QMM as a team, the use and training in public narrative facilitated the emergence of key aspects for team building such as defining shared purpose and facilitating strategy, creating and strengthening social relationships among teachers, effective conflict solving; or holding others accountable.

Case Study 2. A study on the effectiveness of Public Narrative as a leadership development approach for Patient Leaders in the in the "Maternity Voices Partnership" program, supported and facilitated by the organization Horizons-English National Health Service (NHS)

How can Public Narrative enhance the confidence, capability and skills of service-user representatives (or Patient Leaders) in the National Health Service (NHS) in England?

Methods

The analysis consisted in looking at how one cohort of Patient Leaders, the Chairs of local Maternity Voices Partnerships (MVPs), have used Public Narrative to enhance their effectiveness in leading transformation in maternity services as part of the NHS Maternity Transformation Programme. This was a pilot initiative led by NHS Horizons.

Findings

Our study suggests two main ways in which Public Narrative can enhance the effectiveness of Patient Leaders in service improvement in general and maternity services in specific. First, training and coaching in the Public Narrative framework enables Patient Leaders to gain insight into, articulate and then craft their lived experience of healthcare services in a way that connects with and activates the underlying values of others ("shared purpose"), such that those experiences become an emotional resource on which Patient Leaders can draw to influence future service design and decision-making processes. Second, Public Narrative provides a simple and compelling structure through which Patient Leaders can enhance their skills, confidence and capability as "healthcare leaders", both individually and collectively.

The study concluded that the use of Public Narrative can significantly enhance the confidence, capability and skills of Patient Leaders, both to identify and coalesce around shared purpose and to advance genuine co-production in the design and improvement of healthcare services in general and maternity services in specific.

Case Study 3. The use of public narrative by the civic organization "We The People Michigan" (USA) as way to facilitate team formation in leadership development and community organizing with the "Drive Michigan Forward" coalition.

How is WTP-MI using public narrative for the development of individual and collective leadership in the context of its organizing activities?

We The People Michigan is a left-of-center-non-profit organization aimed at organizing for the rights of minority and vulnerable groups across the state of Michigan in the United States.

In 2008, the state of Michigan (USA) revoked driving licenses and IDs for the undocumented. For this reason, immigrants and their allies formed a statewide coalition called Drive Michigan Forward (DMF). The mission of DMF is to restore driver's licenses to all and pave the way for basic dignity and security for members of our community.

Methods

Data has been collected from different sources. Qualitative online fieldwork was carried out between 2019 and 2020 with members of the WTP-MI and the DMF coalition. In depth-interviews with members who play different roles at WTP-MI and who have been involved at different moments of the campaign were conducted. Also, stakeholders' members of the Drive Michigan Forward coalition were also interviewed. Participant observations were done in October and November 2020 specifically about WTP-MI training sessions related to the Deep Canvassing Programme, as well as events in which the DFM campaign was presented.

Findings

Public narrative and the use of storytelling were coached as part of the organizing methodology characteristic of WTP-MI and then brought to the DMF coalition. Evidence gathered shows that the use of the public narrative pedagogy has enhanced two underlying aspects that were of upmost importance for team formation and effective group working. First, sharing personal stories to know each other and found a common base, thus crafting and having a sense of a story of us. Second, facilitating that the organizations members of the coalition do not focus on their own needs and on their single agenda, but that they focus as a group on the urgency of tackling their constituents' needs, in this case the need of making possible that undocumented migrants in Michigan can get driving licenses.

WTP-MI deep concern on how to restore power and put it "in the right hands" impregnates its way of working and of understanding what its mission should be, that of seeding the ground to transform the organizing ecosystem in Michigan. The use of storytelling as part of the underlying aspects of the DMF campaign is facilitating the establishment of links between its various actors (community, organizations, politicians, authorities, decision-makers, etc.), based on trust and solidarity. Findings also reveal that those activities oriented to relationship building cannot be neglected as they are pivotal in activating effective leadership and creating a dynamic environment capable of building and sustaining organizational capacity.

KEY LEARNINGS AND TAKEAWAYS

1. The potential of the effectiveness of using **storytelling for public leadership** can be learned and coached using the Public Narrative pedagogy.
2. The use of Public Narrative in the public domain can enhance the **creation of a sense of "Usness"** which is key for effective leadership development.
3. The use of Public Narrative in the public domain can contribute to **close the gap between leaders and constituencies**, humanizing relationships and enhancing agency.
4. The use of Public Narrative helps shaping the boundaries of the group based on **shared lived experiences**, acknowledging the role that others plain in shaping own's identity.
5. The coaching and learning of Public Narrative as part of the organizing methodology can have an **effective impact when used in organizing campaigns.**
6. Learning and couching Public Narrative can significantly **improve team's communication**, thus helping to connect with each other within the team.
7. The use of Public Narrative within teams can have a **positive impact on the organizational structure of a team.**
8. Public narrative facilitates **building relationships of trust and solidarity.**
9. The Public Narrative pedagogy can significantly contribute to set the common ground for **agreeing how to work together and solve conflicts.**
10. It is not the *discourse* or the *speech* what matters, but the social relationships that can be established through dialogue. Stories shape social reality; the **coaching and learning of Public Narrative for leadership development can enhance "agentic relationships"**, in which those agreeing to work together are better able to collaborate and be more effective in accomplishing their shared purpose.

PROJECT IDENTITY

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