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The Force of Political Emotions

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The role of emotions in (climate) policy narratives: How can it be analysed?

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Executive Summary

Climate Policies are a prime example that even in fields where scientific knowledge and factual knowledge are crucial, policymaking is far from being a rational process. Rather, narratives, storytelling and political emotions are inextricably linked to climate policies and politics, also given the climate transformation's extensive and redistributive impact on societies and livelihoods. This fundamental role of narratives for policy processes is captured by the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), and this framework also acknowledges the crucial role that emotions play. With the homo narrans as the micro foundation, the NPF places emotion at the centre of attention and stresses that "affect-imbued stories" (Jones et al. 2022, 139) are key for how individuals make sense of the world and, consequently, navigate through the policy process. Still, NPF scholars have only recently started to investigate emotions more thoroughly (e.g. Pierce et al. 2021; 2022).

In this Working Paper, we begin with a literature review on policy narratives and emotions in climate policy. We then aim for a more systematic conceptualization of the role that emotions play for the construction of policy narratives. For this, we rely on appraisal theory from psychology. We argue that the different components of the emotion process in appraisal theory can be linked to the different narrative elements (i.e. narrative setting, plot, characters, and moral). This approach enhances our understanding of how emotions work within policy narratives, and provides a basis for empirical application. Finally, the Working Paper reviews different categories of emotions that have been distinguished for public policy research, and discusses selected emotions through the lens of appraisal theory, including extant findings of their role in climate policy.

1 Introduction

Despite the effects of climate change being scientifically known since the 1970s, it has taken much longer for them to be addressed politically. As Kleres and Wettergren (2017) and Noorgaard (2011) argue, political inertia and public apathy regarding climate change are related to collective emotion management, "through which fear of climate change, guilt for causing it, and hopelessness as a response to both these emotions, are controlled" (Kleres and Wettergren 2017, 510). How we feel about climate change and about climate policies thus is not only an individual matter, but is embedded within socio-cultural contexts and influenced by climate policy communication. The following quote from the German Minister for the Environment, Steffi Lemke, from the G7's agreement to phase-out coal illustrates that. Her words of 'damage' and 'responsibility' allude to compassion for the environment, fear of the climate crisis, but also hope on the G7's determined action:

> *Once again, the G7 are showing that they are prepared to tackle the three existential crises of our time – the climate crisis, the extinction of species and the pollution crisis – with determination. The G7 countries have a special responsibility in solving these crises because they are responsible for a large proportion of global resource consumption and the associated change to the climate and environment. We have no time to lose.* (Steffi Lemke, 2024[1]; own translation)

Against this backdrop, climate change and environmental policy is a key playing field for policy narratives, storytelling, and political emotions – also given its extensive and re-distributive impact on society and livelihoods and its politically polarized character (Ojala et al. 2021; Wendler 2022; Zilles and Marg 2023). Moreover, it has been highlighted that the urgency to take political action regarding climate change calls for accessible and concise political communication (Fløttum and Gjerstad 2017; Jones 2014), which further enhances the importance of narratives and emotions in this field. Through policy narratives, policy actors communicate policies to the public, create narrative accounts of state action, and address social groups through specific target group constructions. In the CIDAPE[2] project, we want – amongst others – to examine how climate policies are communicated by policy actors through emotionally charged policy narratives, and how specific emotions are employed within the policy narratives.

Against this backdrop, we take climate policy as a case in point in pursuit of two larger questions: **What is the role of emotions in policy narratives? And how can we study it?**

It has been highlighted that emotions are crucial for policy narratives and for their effects (Jones et al. 2022; Pierce 2021), in particular by the literature on the **Narrative Policy Framework (NPF)** (see section 2.1 for details on the NPF). Yet despite their stressed relevance, the role of emotions in policy narratives has so far been under-conceptualised and is only beginning to be empirically explored.

With this Working paper we aim for a more **systematic conceptualization of the role that emotions play for the construction of policy narratives**. For this, we rely on **appraisal theory** from psychology. We argue that the different components of the emotion process in appraisal theory can be linked to the different narrative elements (i.e. narrative setting, plot, characters, and moral). This approach **enhances our understanding of how emotions work within policy narratives, and provides a basis for empirical application**.

In the following, we will first discuss extant literature and studies on narratives and emotions, particularly in the field of climate policy (Section 2). In Section 3, we then develop the conceptual framework for understanding and analysing the role of emotions within policy narratives, drawing on the insights from appraisal theory from psychology. In Section 4, we review different **categories of emotions that have been distinguished for public policy research**. Based on one such categorization, we discuss selected emotions through the lens of appraisal theory, included extant findings of their role in climate policy. This gives a hint on how the emotions can be expected to function within policy narratives based on our conceptual framework. As Section 5 concludes, the framework builds a foundation for empirically analysing and measuring emotions within policy narratives.

[1] https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Pressemitteilungen/2024/04/20240430-g7-staaten-kohleausstieg-mitte-2030er-jahre.html

[2] See: https://cidape.eu/

2 Policy Narratives and Emotions in Climate Policy

In this section, we review the literature on the role of narratives, particularly as studied through the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) in climate policy, and paying attention to previous findings on their use of emotions and emotional perception. We particularly focus on the NPF when asking for the role of emotions in policy narratives, as it is an empirically testable theoretical framework which allows for quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies, therefore opening up for a broad spectrum of applications and research interests.

2.1 Policy narratives and the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF)

Within public policy scholarship, a 'policy narrative' refers to a "communicative portrayal of a sequence of actions and/or events in a simplified way, which reflects a certain construction of a policy problem and/or policy solution. Policy narratives are often assumed to have certain structural elements, particularly characters and plots" (Blum and Kuhlmann 2023). Different theoretical approaches have been developed in public policy research throughout the years to study policy narratives, ranging from more interpretive to more positivist approaches. In the following, we focus on the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), an established policy-process theory to study policy narratives, which can serve for quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods NPF studies. In the following, we briefly describe this theory (for more details, see: Jones et al. 2022, 2023; Shanahan, Jones, and McBeth 2018).

Policy narratives according to the NPF are used at all stages of the policy process within institutional and informal venues and serve "to influence others, to attract attention, persuade or manipulate" (Jones et al. 2023, 161). To understand the dynamics and uses of policy narratives therefore enables to understand core dynamics at various stages of the policy process. Since 2010 (Jones and McBeth 2010) the NPF was developed as an theoretically grounded and explicitly empirically testable framework, which is continuously being advanced (Schlaufer et al. 2022, 264).

The framework draws on a range of core assumptions, such as the *social construction* of policy reality which is however *bounded* by belief systems, cultural contexts and ideologies (Shanahan, Jones, and McBeth 2018, 1). The NPF departs from the notion that narratives play an important role in the policy process, precisely because it is in the form of stories, that people communicate and process information (*homo narrans*) (Jones et al. 2023, 162). The minimal definition defines policy narratives "as featuring at least one character (such as heroes, villains, victims etc.) and containing some public policy referent" (Jones et al. 2023, 165). In addition to characters, policy narratives contain three other generalizable core elements: a *setting*, which is the policy context, a *plot* that situates the characters and their relationship in time and space, and a *moral* of the story, as normative action for characters, which is often the policy solution (Shanahan et al. 2018, 175f.). Further, policy narratives operate and can be analysed at three interacting levels: "micro (individual), meso (group), and macro (cultural and institutional)" (Shanahan, Jones, and McBeth 2018, 2).

2.2 Literature Review: How have emotions in climate policy been researched in policy narratives?

The story-based form of cognition assumed by the NPF is an affective form of cognition, where affect focusses attention and sets priorities (Jones et al. 2023, 168). Nevertheless, the particular role that emotions play within policy narratives is only beginning to be conceptualized, e.g. by Pierce et al. (2022). It has been shown that policy actors use emotional appeal – such as 'anger' or 'fear' – within their strategic use of policy narratives (Pierce, 2022). Given our starting point of climate policies, in the following we focus on extant literature on emotions in climate policy narratives. The following section primarily focuses on NPF studies, yet occasionally includes research on policy narratives beyond the scope of the NPF, when these studies were considered to contribute valuable insights.

Firstly, **most NPF studies that attend to emotions and climate policy have a focus on characters and are set in the US-American context**. Several studies analyse 'character affect', meaning how people react on the micro level to differently displayed characters (Boscarino 2022; Jones 2014; Zanocco, Song, and Jones 2018). Some meso-level studies focus on how specific characters are used in combination with emotions e.g. as part of a coalitional strategy to make policy narratives more persuasive (Pierce et al. 2022, 27f.). Peterson

and Zanocco (2023) find a positive effect for macro-level policy narratives that focus on problems and the character of the victim, which they name "stories of fear".

Thus, the relationship between characters and emotions seems to be currently at the focus of attention. This is not surprising since characters are considered as the "emotional engines of policy stories" (Crow and Jones 2018, 3). The actions of these characters matter with regard to the agency and responsibility ascribed to them in the roles of heroes, villains, and victims. Nevertheless, the strategic use of characters in relation to different emotions in the context of climate change requires further exploration that goes beyond the micro-level and the particular context of local US climate policies. It could explore if there are specific characters that appear in climate policy narratives and to which specific emotions they are connected. For instance, Ojala et al.'s (2021) literature review indicates that there are particular emotional responses towards the phenomenon of climate change, such as climate change worry, eco-anxiety and ecological grief (ibid, p. 37). Recent studies conceptualized new characters, such as 'the beneficiary', since it has been argued that the typical NPF characters do not feature in all contexts (Vogeler et al. 2021). In climate policy narratives also non-human entities, such as 'the environment' can eventually be featured as characters – as long as they are prescribed an agency in the narratives themselves (see Boscarino 2022).

Secondly, when investigating the narrative use of emotions empirically, there is a focus on studying **right-wing populist actors regarding their "emotionality"** (Caiani and Di Cocco 2023; Skonieczny 2018; Wojczewski 2022). Focusing only on 'populist' actors when studying emotions can bare the risk of conceptualizing emotions as something undesirable, that should be avoided in policy processes. In line with the NPF assumptions, it is rather to be assumed that emotions form an integral part of communication and cognitive processes in general (Durnová 2015; Jones et al., 2023; Shanahan et al., 2018). Therefore, also assumingly rational or technocratic discourses should be emotion-laden (and could e.g. be compared to 'populist' discourses in their use of emotions). Leaving emotions out can obscure important dynamics of the policy process, such as "nonlinear effects to gains and losses, especially when protest is involved" (Kuhlmann and Starke 2024, 4), or why "some discourses are prioritized over others through the prioritization of some values" (Durnová 2015, 227).

Thirdly, there seems to be a **lack of NPF studies, that investigate the connection between emotions of social inequality and climate policy**. As Ojala et al. (2021, 48) show, especially for vulnerable groups climate change can evoke strong emotional responses. The impact of climate change tends to increase social inequalities, wherefore climate policies should have a strong re-distributive effect. In the screened NPF literature on climate policy we observed two avenues to study emotions and its relation to inequality based on the narrative *setting* or on the narrative *plot*: A couple of NPF-Studies analysing climate policy discourse link the NPF element of the *setting* to emotions (Antonova 2023; Hermwille et al. 2023; Lütkes, Tuitjer, and Dirksmeier 2023; Remling 2023). In these studies, the setting is linked to places, that are potentially meaningful, which provide opportunities for collective identification and senses of belonging. The setting describes environmental or social conditions that influence the plot and potentially create obstacles or opportunities for characters. Since spatial contexts are transformed by the effects of climate change impact, climate governance or transformation processes, the emotional relationships to those places are also altered, e.g. creating feelings of being "left behind" (Antonova 2023) or of hopeful narratives for a region (Hermwille et al. 2023). Moreover, it may be fruitful to investigate whether the NPF element of the plot is linked to emotions surrounding climate change and inequality. As demonstrated by Kuhlmann and Blum (2019; 2021), redistributive conflicts can be reflected in the NPF element of the plot. Consequently, an analysis of the narratives surrounding redistributive climate policies may identify potential avenues for further research. This analysis could focus on the redistributive nature of narrative plots and the emotions attached to them.

3 Conceptualising the Role of Emotions in the Narrative Policy Framework

In the last section, we discussed extant research on policy narratives in climate policy (particularly NPF research), with a focus on emotion-related findings, and further empirical research needs. There is, however, a more fundamental issue that goes beyond the realm of climate policy and concerns the study of emotions in policy narratives more generally, namely: In **extant studies, a systematic conceptualization of emotions is lacking, which goes beyond a continuum of very positive to very negative** (Pierce 2021; Pierce et al. 2022). A more coherent conceptualization of emotions which is in line with the assumptions of the NPF[3] should acknowledge **emotions as contextually embedded, socially constructed through language and as part of social discourses** (Yordy, Durnová, and Weible 2024, 37f.). This section attends to such a conceptualization.

There is no uncontroversial definition of emotions in the social sciences, but what is considered crucial about emotions in the social world is that they are "sources of happiness and misery" (Elster 2015, 138), influence beliefs and motivations (ibid.), and are related to certain "action tendencies" (ibid.). Public policy scholars who aim to integrate emotions in their research have a variety of established theories at their disposal. For instance, Sirin and Villalobos highlight affective intelligence theory and different group-centred approaches in this context (see also e.g. Brader and Marcus 2013; Capelos 2011; Maor and Gross 2015). We follow Kuhlmann and Starke (2024) in **applying appraisal theory to the field of public policy**. In what follows, we will first describe appraisal theory (3.1), and then combine it with the NPF (3.2).

3.1 Appraisal theory

Appraisal theory's **main idea is that "emotions are elicited by evaluations (appraisals) of events and situations**"(Roseman et al. 2001, 3). Emotions are thus understood in a procedural rather than in a static way (Moors et al., 2013, 119). Appraisal theory posits that there are distinct emotions, and that "each distinct emotion is elicited by a distinctive pattern of appraisal" (Roseman et al. 2001, 6). Moreover, and in line with most public policy approaches, appraisal theory stresses the crucial role of actors and their perceptions, since it is "interpretations of events, rather than events themselves, that cause emotions" (Roseman et al. 2001, 6). This puts narratives centre stage when it comes to emotions, as individuals are reliant on language and stories "to make meaning of […] experiences" (Pierce et al. 2022, 7). Emotions are socially constructed (Fink et al. 2023), and therefore also different actors may interpret situations differently, and appraisal patterns of situations underlie cultural variations (Moors et al. 2013, 121).

The process that leads to an emotion consists of several steps (Scherer and Moors 2019). The first step focuses on how an event triggers an individual's appraisals (elicitation). The stimulus of an emotion can take various forms, such as events, the behaviour of others, or personal memories. Importantly, the appraisal of these stimuli is based on different appraisal criteria (see below). In a second step, the results of the appraisals are translated into distinct action tendencies, which are followed by physiological responses and motor expressions (differentiation). This results, in a third step, in an experienced feeling (representation) which can, in a fourth step, be verbalized (categorization and labelling). In this understanding, an expression like "I am afraid" is the outcome of an emotion process, and not the starting point.

For using appraisal theory to analyse the role of emotions in policy narratives, the level of NPF analysis is important. On the micro level, through surveys or experiments, scholars could analyse how narratives are emotionally processed by individuals. This would involve a relatively straightforward focus on all four elements of the emotion process from an individual perspective (i.e. elicitation; differentiation; representation; categorization and labelling). In this paper, however, our focus is how policymakers strategically incorporate emotions into their policy narratives to elicit emotions and motivate potential actions (meso-level NPF). Against this backdrop, in the following we zoom in on the first two stages (elimination and differentiation), because policy narratives are guided by the overarching questions of how situations are to be evaluated and what action follows from it. Turning back to those two stages of appraisal theory: Which appraisal dimensions are important for eliciting specific emotions? And how are the appraisals translated into action tendencies?

[3] Among the core assumptions of the NPF's model of the individual are among others: the *social construction of reality*, i.e. policy actors assign variable meaning to objects and processes of public policy, the *primacy of affect* before reason and *bounded rationality*, meaning decision making occurs under restrained time and information (Jones et al., 2023, 7).

In the elicitation stage, a crucial question is which appraisal criteria can be distinguished. Although appraisal scholars have over the years developed quite nuanced appraisal criteria, it is still possible to distinguish general appraisal criteria (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003, 576–82). Particularly interesting for our purposes is the distinction of primary and secondary appraisal as developed by Lazarus (1966). Primary appraisals refer to the implications of an emotion-eliciting event for the individual. The most fundamental appraisal criteria here are novelty and valence, which can be considered as "basic dimensions" (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003, 576). Novelty can be seen as "gateway to the emotion system" (ibid.). It directs attention to the stimulus and mobilizes resources to deal with it. Valence refers to a stimulus being perceived as pleasant or unpleasant. Beyond these basic criteria, a third criterion that can be considered as primary appraisal is goal relevance: Does the event have any personal relevance? And is the event rather congruent or incongruent to an individual's personal goals? (Sirin and Villalobos 2019, 4). Secondary appraisal relates in particular to the dimensions of agency (Can the stimulus be attributed to oneself or to someone else) and control or power (Is the situation perceived as controllable by the individual or not?) (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003, 580). Finally, there is the appraisal dimension that stresses the relevance of the social context. Here, individuals assess the stimulus based on their own norms and values (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003, 581). As Sirin and Villalobos (2019, 4) summarize, secondary appraisal thus can involve "self/other-oriented blame/credit attributions […], coping potential […], and future expectations".

In the differentiation phase, appraisals are then translated into action tendencies. These can take very different forms. For example, some elicitors might motivate the individual to actively approach the issue, while others might rather result in resignation (see e.g. Roseman et al. 2001).

3.2 Bringing together appraisal theory and the Narrative Policy Framework

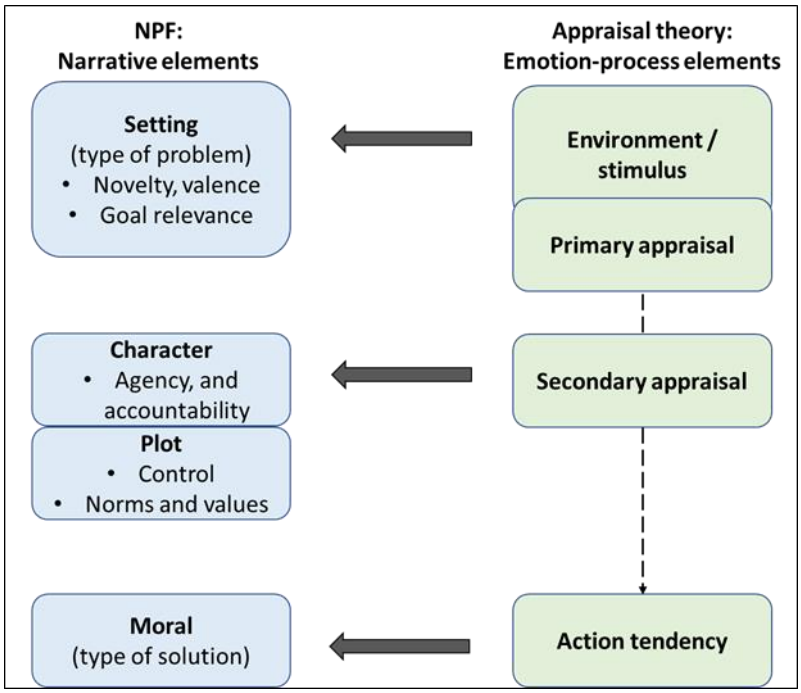
While it has already been stressed that the relationship between narratives and emotions is pretty straightforward, **appraisal theory seems a particularly good fit for analysing emotions in the NPF more thoroughly**. The NPF's underlying model of homo narrans stresses that "affect-imbued stories […] drive cognition, communication, and decision-making" (Jones et al. 2022, 139). Appraisal theory is in line with this reasoning by showing in detail how the appraisal of a stimulus is translated into an action tendency.

The different phases of the emotion process in appraisal theory can be linked to the different narrative elements. The narrative elements are no static elements, but (chronologically and/or causally) linked through the plot that is strongly process-oriented. In the NPF, the plot "provides the arc of action where events interact with actions of the characters and the setting, sometimes arranged in a beginning, middle, and end sequence" (Shanahan et al. 2018, 176).

One might object that appraisal theory captures emotional processes within individuals, whereas the structural elements capture what is told within a policy narrative. However, an equivalent dual function is served by 'policy narratives' themselves (i.e. sense-making of individual policy actors, and strategic use in pursuit of policy goals), or by other core concepts such as 'policy beliefs' (i.e. capturing beliefs of policy actors, but also expression of policy preferences). Meso-level NPF analyses have focused on "the strategic construction and communication of policy narratives by policy actors" (Shanahan et al. 2018, 187). We can thus understand narratives as being purposefully crafted by policymakers to generate distinct emotions in an audience. Policy narratives might, for instance, follow the steps of appraisal processes to substantiate the portrayal of narrative characters, or the choice of a certain policy solution as the narrative's moral.

Thus, we argue that it is **possible to link the different components of the emotion process in appraisal theory to the different narrative elements in the NPF** (for an overview see figure 1).

Figure 1 LINKING THE NARRATIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND APPRAISAL THEORY



Source: own presentation.

In the following, we describe successively for the four narrative elements how the emotion process of appraisal theory links to them (figure 1):

- **Setting**: The narrative setting portrays the policy problem and the policy context in which the narrative is situated. The contexts in which the setting locates specific narratives may be emotionally-laden (e.g. certain geographical settings, such as 'home' or 'foreign'). Generally, the setting transports important background within the narrative that elicits primary appraisals. We assume that the basic appraisals related to novelty and valence can be elicited by how the setting is being portrayed, i.e.: Is the event new and deserves my attention? Do I perceive the event as pleasant or unpleasant? In addition to that, the setting mostly already contains some information that give a hint on goal relevance: Is the portrayed event relevant to me or not?
- **Characters**: As "emotional engine of policy stories" (Jones and Crow 2017, 3), we should expect that characters play a crucial role for eliciting appraisals. Indeed, we expect them to be particularly important when it comes to agency, especially how the attribution of the stimulus takes place, including the question if someone is blamed for a situation (villain) or not (victim)? Characters are thus mainly linked to secondary appraisal, while in some cases also the behaviour of characters themselves may constitute a stimulus (c.f. Scherer and Moors 2019).
- **Plot**: As "logic or syntax of narrative" (Somers 1994, 616), the plot can be considered central to the narrative structure. We expect that the plot will particularly allude to the appraisal dimensions of control or power, and norms and values. Indeed, the question if an event can be controlled or not is also crucial in Stone's (2012) stories of power that drive many NPF plot conceptualisations. While stories of control tell an event as something that can be addressed through (political) action, stories of helplessness rather state the opposite. Moreover, stories of change portray a situation as either deteriorating (=stories of decline) or improving (=stories of rising). This can be linked to the appraisal dimension of norms and values, as we can for example expect that especially events that are perceived as violating social norms can be told in terms of decline. Like characters, the plot refers to secondary appraisal.

- **Moral**: While the other narrative elements refer to the different appraisal dimensions, we link moral to the action tendency of an emotion. The moral can be considered as the key take-away message of a narrative in terms of what should be done (or not) about a situation. This is in line with the action tendency in appraisal theory, i.e. if a situation should be actively approached – for example by means of adopting a specific policy – or if a rather passive stance should be adopted – for example through negative policy decisions or non-decisions.

As figure 1 shows, the structural elements from NPF lend themselves to be linked to the components from the emotion process developed in appraisal theory. Bringing these psychological insights about the development of emotions and the conceptual specifications into the NPF can help gaining a more profound and comprehensive picture of the role emotions play, and the functions they are used for within policy narratives. The next section discusses this for different types of emotions that have been categorized for public policy.

4 Categories of Emotions in Public Policy

4.1 Emotion categorisations

Following appraisal theory, emotions are regarded as a process that occurs in response to the interpretation of events (Scherer and Moors 2019). As shown in the last section, we consider appraisal theory to be fruitful to combine with NPF theory and the distinct narrative elements. According to appraisal theory, it is possible to distinguish different emotions as the representation of the appraisal outcomes on various dimensions (Redlawsk and Mattes 2022). These appraisal criteria are *novelty, valence, goal relevance*, *agency* as well as *norms and values* (Moors et al. 2013, 120).

As a next step, and in particular when moving from conceptualizing the role of emotions towards empirical application, studying and measuring the use of emotions within policy narratives, it is **essential *which* emotions come to the fore in public policy, and how they can be analytically distinguished**.

Indeed, numerous categorizations of types of emotions exist in different literatures: The most common differentiation is made between emotions of positive or negative valence. Roseman (2011) differentiates further between four groups of emotions according to the social action tendencies associated with the emotions: contacting, distancing, attack and rejection.[4]

Especially political emotions have to be understood in social contexts. Therefore, also moral and collective emotions as group-oriented emotions have to be considered (Redlawsk and Mattes 2022, 148). Whereas moral emotions "connect behaviour and moral standards", collective emotions describe "sharing emotions within a group in response to events and actions implicating it" (ibid, 148f.). Emotions can be experienced on an individual and a group level alike, depending on the context and are followed by different action orientations. However the relationship between individual and collective emotions seems to be difficult to theorise and to trace empirically (Della Porta and Giugni 2013; Goldenberg et al. 2020; Kuhlmann and Starke 2024; Redlawsk and Mattes 2022). We consider that the strategic use and evocation of emotions by policy actors addressing their audiences through policy narratives may address emotions on both, individual and collective levels.

While **some emotions, such as anger, have been extensively studied, especially so-called positive emotions (hope, enthusiasm) are poorly studied as political emotions to date**. It has been argued that positive emotions are more difficult to differentiate, and that people experience several positive emotions at the same time (Redlawsk & Mattes, 2022, 144). Similarly, negative emotions in the context of political discourse have been found to occur together with other emotions (Fink et al. 2023, 477; Yordy, Durnová, and Weible 2024, 46). Certainly, the co-occurrence of different emotions makes differentiation more difficult. Yet analysing precisely these empirical combinations of emotions can contribute to a better understanding of the interactions between emotions, narratives and policy actors within particular contexts (ibid). Also, Ojala et al. (2021, 49) suggest that particularly in the context of climate change "meaning focused coping", i.e. the ability to switch perspectives between different emotions (e.g. worry and hope) could lead to regaining feelings of control and agency. Also, the action tendencies of negative climate-specific, political emotions are often motivating for action (Ojala et al. 2021, 48).[5] Thus, also the transformation between different emotions, the evolution and the sequence of emotions within policy processes over time is of interest (Verhoeven and Metze 2022).

As we aim to shed light on strategic uses of political emotions within policy narratives and on the emotional reception of these narratives in the context of European climate policy discourses, a **context-sensitive approach to emotions seems particularly relevant**. For this purpose, we use an emotion categorization that was inductively developed for the public policy context, first by Yordy, Durnová, and Weible (2024) (and see: Fullerton et al. 2023; Fullerton and Weible 2024; Gabehart et al. 2023). The authors distinguish between **eight emotional categories[6]: *anger, carelessness, dismay, fear, affinity, confidence/ trust, content, and compassion*** (adapted from Yordy et al., 2024; Gabehart et al., 2023; Fullerton et al., 2023; Fullerton & Weible 2024).

[4] The common (yet not uncontested) differentiation between 'positive' and 'negative' emotions, can be for instance specified through grouping emotions regarding their action tendencies within social and political contexts: "contacting (all positive emotions)", "distancing (negative emotions with low control potential)", "attack (negative, appetitive emotions with high control potential)" and "rejection (negative, aversive emotions with high control potential (Roseman, 2011, cited from: Redlawsk & Mattes, 2022, 140)".

[5] In contrast to "clinically manifest" negative emotions, that e.g. people on the individual level experience due to personal trauma etc. (see Ojala et al., 2021).

[6] The number of emotion categories differs slightly between these texts, and may need to be adapted to context.

The different emotion categories were inductively derived from textual analysis of public policy documents and are thus context-specific discursive constructions: "the emotion words were read in the discourse and then grouped into categories through constant comparison to each other, and each explicit word can only fit within one category" (Fullerton and Weible 2024, 3). Given the inductive, empirical and context-dependent character of the emotions categories, the number of categories and their composition varies.

For the same reason, there is often a lack of theoretical foundations and on research in the field of climate policy on particular categories, such as *carelessness* and *content*. Both categories indicate rather subtle states of emotional expression: *Content* indicates a positive valence, that is not necessarily related to others[7]. However, we could not find substantial research on *content* in the context of climate policy. Aspects of the category *content* may be also addressed by the category of *affinity* and of *trust/confidence*, although these categories are other-related but seem to be according to existing research important in the context of climate policy. For *carelessness*, too, we could find neither theoretical foundations nor empirical research in the field of climate policy. *Carelessness* also seems to be close to concepts such as dismay or anger, but rather expresses an emotional state of apathy. [8]

For this reason, in describing the emotion categories and appraisal criteria, we first focus on those categories that have been shown to be particularly relevant in the context of climate policy on the basis of existing research, i.e. ***affinity, compassion, confidence/trust, anger, dismay, fear,*** **and** ***suffering*** (Fullerton, Weible, and Gabehart 2023). Nevertheless, we keep the excluded categories *content* and *carelessness* in mind in order to be able to examine them empirically at a later point in time.

4.2 Appraisal criteria for the emotion types

In the following, we will *discuss different discrete emotions along their specific appraisal criteria* (see above). As discussed in the previous section, we build on the categorization of emotion types that has been established for the public policy context, and empirically applied for the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) as a policy theory similar to the NPF[9] (Yordy, Durnová, and Weible 2024; Gabehart et al. 2023).[10]

To discuss how the emotion types can be expected to function within policy narratives, we draw on existing research on these emotions from the context of climate policy. As the field of NPF research on distinct emotions and climate policy is still emerging, we occasionally include studies that exceed the scope of the NPF, but which may contribute valuable insights regarding the dynamics of particular emotions that could be of interest for further research. In the following, **we describe the appraisal dimensions of *affinity, compassion, confidence/trust, anger, dismay, fear,* and *suffering*** and discuss existing research on these emotions from climate policy. **A summary of the emotions and appraisal criteria can also be found in Table 1 in the appendix.**

The research discussed is of exemplary character. Given that our research question concerns the meso-level, meaning the use of emotions by grouped actors, we included examples pertaining to this level of analysis. However, it is also expected that levels of analysis will interact. Consequently, findings on the individual (micro) level, such as how citizens react emotionally to policy narratives, and on the macro level, such as how narratives shape institutions and cultural norms, may provide interesting insights that could be further explored on the meso level. There are promising approaches presented by studies such as Pierce et al. (2021; 2022) and the dictionary-based approach to trace emotions by Yordy et al. (2024), and Fink et al. (2023). The presented examples serve to illustrate emotional dynamics pertaining to the context of climate policy. In a next step that goes beyond the scope of this paper, it will be necessary to empirically test and verify these categories, e.g. building on the more comprehensive conceptualisation of emotions in the NPF that we have proposed in this

[7] "Emotion words indicate an actor's positive internal emotional state without inherent association with others […]. This category includes emotion words such as calm, comfortable, delighted, enjoy, glad, laugh, pleased, satisfied, unafraid, unsurprised." (Fullerton et al., 2023, 314)

[8] "Emotion words indicate either an apathy for someone/something or a state of disregard for the emotions of others. This category includes emotion words such as apathy, careless, "don't care", disregard, selfish, uncaring or unconcerned" Fullerton et al., 2023, 314).

[9] For instance, the NPF and the ACF share the assumption of strategically acting actors and coalitions, and the NPF has both borrowed and suggested hypothesis from/to the ACF (Shanahan, Jones, and McBeth 2011).

[10] The resulting emotion thesaurus presents therefore a complex, contextual tool for empirical analysis of emotions in public policy. Nevertheless, understanding emotions within the European context of climate policy narratives and inequality will make it eventually necessary to adjust some emotion words or categories.

paper (section 3). **For exemplifying how policy narratives could use the respective emotions, we created policy narrative illustrations for the case of (supporting or contesting) climate-related speed limits on motorways (see below).**

4.2.1 Anger

In appraisal theory, **anger mostly results from "outside events […] seen as an offense or mistreatment**" (Berkowitz 1999, 415). Four elicitors are generally linked to anger (Kuhlmann and Starke 2024): Goal blocking, which means that actors perceive the stimulus as something that is impeding them to achieve their goal(s); Blame, which refers to the stimulus as an outside event for which someone else is to blame; Unfairness, which refers to the fact that the stimulus violates social norms; And Control, which refers to actors' perception that something can be done about the situation. Although anger is associated with a negative valence, the resulting action tendencies of anger are regarded as prosocial, and "as a motivating emotion, associated with optimism […] and the willingness to take risks in order to correct the wrong inflicted, but also with the desire to punish, with aggression, and even physical violence" (Kuhlmann and Starke 2024). In the emotion thesaurus, words like 'angry', 'blame', 'complain', 'enrage', 'tension', 'heated' or 'frustration' are related to anger (Fullerton, Weible, and Gabehart 2023).

Anger is one of the most researched emotions in political science (Redlawsk and Mattes 2022, 141). In the context of NPF research, Pierce et al.'s (2021; 2022) studies of anger and fear present promising approaches, which strive for a systematic conceptualization of particular emotions within policy narratives. Empirically, Pierce (2022) highlights the strategic use of anger and fear in policy narratives by coalitions to advocate for policy change, regarding a regulation of oil and gas drilling in Colorado, USA. Especially the coalitional strategy of using anger towards villains (in this case toward oil and gas industry) proved to be successful for the winning environmental coalition to make policy narratives more persuasive (ibid, 27f.). Employing a dictionary-based approach, Pattison et al. (2022) study policy sentiment in Twitter debates on Fracking and investigate, how certain words are used to evoke emotions of different narrative strategies, i.e. devil shift (e.g. fear, anger) or angel shift (e.g. joy, trust).

In their analysis of emotions in climate activism, Kleres and Wettergren (2017) observe that anger plays a relevant role in climate activism, but that it interacts with other emotions and with different cultural contexts. The authors see the transformative and mobilizing potential of anger in the attribution of blame, which can transform acute fear into anger and lead to feelings of hope among climate activists from the Global South (ibid, 516f.). Interestingly, the authors observed a reluctance among climate activists from the Global North to strategically use anger and blaming for collective mobilization, arguing that this would result in alienating audiences (ibid, 517).

Hermwille et al. (2023) identify a range of competing 'just transition' narratives linked to different emotions. Policy narratives, which ascribe blame for substantial or procedural injustices to specific actors, are described as "stories of restrained progress" (ibid, 6). Given the blame ascription, these narratives may contain expressions of anger, though this aspect was not further analysed by the authors.

Figure 2 EXEMPLARY POLICY NARRATIVE EXPRESSING ANGER

*"The government's **ridiculous** proposition for a speed limit is an **affront** on our civil liberties. They want to control how we live."*

Source: Own elaboration. Emotion words in bold.

4.2.2 Affinity

Based on appraisal theory, affinity appears to be a relatively comprehensive category, which describes emotions that **positively relate towards the perceived behaviour of others**. Affinity could thus largely be grouped to the category of positive emotions. A variety of emotion-words in the context of public policy was linked to affinity, among them 'hope', 'desire', 'gratitude' but also verbs as 'promote', 'want', or 'cooperate' (Fullerton, Weible, and Gabehart 2023). Also love and desire are featured as emotion words for affinity.

Research on climate policy narratives has focused in particular on the emotion "hope", which Cohen-Chen et al. (2017, 4) describe as follows: "Hope is a positive emotion that arises due to a cognitive process involving thought regarding a desired outcome in the future". Wettergren (2024, 2) argues, that hope is related to "structural inequality" and can vary regarding "the degree of perceived agency". Thus, events may stimulate hope, when they are regarded as novel, and with a positive valence. The event is considered as conductive to actual or future goals and is linked to a variable perception of agency and a positive congruence with norms and values.

Climate change and climate policy are intrinsically linked to the future and thus match with the future-orientation of hope. In policy narratives, hope and hopeful language can fulfil various functions, as to mobilize the audience for action, to support public policies or to persuade the audience of the credibility of actors. Peterson and Zanocco (2023) conceptualize so-called "stories of hope" as policy narratives, which focus on solutions and especially feature the narrative hero character. However, according to the analysis of US State of the Union narratives, stories of hope did not significantly influence congressional attention on climate change mitigation (ibid, 15).

Wettergren (2024) distinguishes between different types of hope in the context of climate change. She argues that, collective action, such as climate activism (Kleres and Wettergren 2017) can generate hope. Also, hope is often accompanied by fear, as both are related to a degree of uncertainty regarding future outcomes (Wettergren, 2024, 1). In the context of social inequality, Wettergren (2024) posits that hope may emerge in the face of unfavourable social or political conditions, which are nevertheless expected to change in the future.

A main finding of Hermwille et al. (2023, 2) comparative study of just transition narratives in four European coal mining regions is that so called "narratives of hope" persist in all regions. The hopeful narratives seek to frame the transition to decarbonization as an opportunity to overcome the historical injustices produced by the fossil fuel regime, and thus also arise in contexts of social injustices.

Remling (2023) explored the use of emotions, especially desire drawing on Lacan's psychoanalytic concept of fantasy in the political communication of German climate adaptation policy. Phantasmatic elements could explain why some policy discourses appear more attractive than others (Remling 2023, 717; 724). By analysing the discourse of public policy brochures, the author suggests that the construction of various, culturally specific fantasies[11] as emotional reference points for identification serves to justify and explain the less ambitious climate adaptation instruments. Although we do not follow a psychoanalytic approach, it seems that the evocation of affinity, desire or love appears to be a powerful tool in gathering support in policy narratives.

Figure 3 EXEMPLARY POLICY NARRATIVE EXPRESSING AFFINITY

*"We have to **encourage** people to lead more sustainable and **responsible** lives. Introducing a speed limit is one way forward to promote a better future with less emissions."*

Source: Own elaboration. Emotion words in bold.

[11] For instance the fantasy of "objectivity and reason" would serve to reassure Germans that adaptation is "a problem soluble through objective measurement and analysis where science, not politics, becomes the inventor of legitimate solutions" (Remling 2023, 723).

4.2.3 Trust/ Confidence

Trust provides the basis for social cohesion of a society and eventually for a majority of democratic practices, such as political representation, political mobilization, voting or policy discussion, since trust-building is linked to perceptions of legitimacy. According to Barbalet (2009, 368f.) trust is **characterized by three main characteristics: a relation of *dependency* from the trust-giver towards the trustee; *uncertainty regarding the foundation of trust* and thus a *limited level of agency***; as well as **the bridging from past to the future**. A positive feeling of expectation regarding another's future actions would work as a main elicitor of trust (ibid, p. 375).

However, the emotional foundation for trust would be confidence, meaning that "trust implies confidence (Barbalet 2009, 376). This seems to be in line with the emotion-words, that are attached to trust in the policy emotion-thesaurus, which are 'confidence', 'empower', 'encourage', 'serious', 'belief', 'safe' (Fullerton et al. 2023). Confidence is defined as "selfprojected assured expectation; it functions to promote social action; it arises in (or is caused by) relations of acceptance and recognition; and its object is the future" (Barbalet 1998, 88).

The NPF assumes that the narrator, i.e. the person telling a policy narrative, matters for persuading the audience: "As narrator trust increases, an individual is more likely to be persuaded by the narrative" (Shanahan et al. 2018, 184). Lybecker et al. (2021) test this assumption for climate policy communication towards working class audiences. Their findings do confirm that narrators can evoke trust and persuade audiences. Although who we trust or not depends on prior belief systems. The authors conclude that, particularly in climate policy communication, well-constructed policy narratives and trustworthy narrators can help build bridges with climate sceptics (ibid, 20).

Although Lütkes et al. (2023) do not explicitly analyse emotions in their study of media narratives on Greta Thunberg's sailing trip to the UN Climate Summit, they do find a wealth of emotional elements. According to the authors, Greta is portrayed as a heroic character and role model in the newspaper coverage because her actions, exemplified by "sailing for the climate," show that she is trustworthy (ibid, 7). Placing hope or trust in Greta may also help to cope with feelings of hopelessness or helplessness regarding climate change and may motivate people to act (ibid, 7).

Figure 4 EXEMPLARY POLICY NARRATIVE EXPRESSING TRUST/ CONFIDENCE

*"We are **confident** that a speed limit not only **ensures** the security of drivers but also reduces carbon emissions efficiently."*

Source: Own elaboration. Emotion words in bold.

4.2.4 Fear

There are several recent studies on the role of fear and anxiety in political crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, but also the climate crisis (Ojala et al. 2021; Pierce et al. 2022; Yordy et al. 2024). Pierce et al. (2022) link the following appraisal characteristics with fear: A **perception of an event as *uncertain* and *unpredictable*, that may lead to dangerous consequences in the future** (ibid, p. 20). The context-specific impact of fear in the policy process would be "increasing attention, increasing risk perception and a pessimistic future outlook, as well as seeking avoidance and compromise" (Pierce 2021; Pierce et al. 2022, 19).

In their systematic literature review on emotions and sustainability transitions, Martiskainen and Sovacool (2021, 616) find fear to feature most prominently in the articles found. In the analysed articles, fear would either be related towards the impact of climate change or on the impact of low-carbon energy transitions for communities. This finding is confirmed by Fink et al.'s (2023) study of policy consultations on electricity grid construction planning in Germany, where the most common emotion expressed by citizens was fear, especially when specific (energy) policies were mentioned.

In the context of NPF studies, Petersen and Zanocco (2023) observed that the US presidents' narratives, and especially 'stories of fear', which focus on problems and the narrative character of the *victim* positively influence congressional attention on climate change issues. Pierce et al. (2022) found that coalitions in the policy making of a regulation of oil and gas drilling used fear strategically, but directed it against different

targets. Opponents directed fear towards uncertain consequences of the bill, whereas the winning environmental coalition directed fear against their opponents, portraying the oil and gas industry as *villain*s (ibid, 28).

Ojala et al. (2021, 37f.) coin the term of "eco-anxiety" and "climate change worry", which both describe variations of fear linked to current and future damage, loss or destruction due to climate change. Those feelings can be caused by the perception, that loved ones (humans or places with emotional value attached) might suffer. The authors further highlight, that anxiety or fear in the context of the climate crisis, and not from a medical-psychiatric conception, is associated with different consequences for action-tendencies: As a political emotion, eco-anxiety could function as "an emotional motivator, making one alert and charged for action, but also something that prepared oneself for analytical thinking (ibid, 27; ibid, 23)".

In a similar vein, Kleres and Wettergren (2017) identify a motivational function for fear among climate activists, by raising awareness for the climate crisis. They also note that activists in different contexts may employ different emotional coping strategies in response to fear: Activists in the Global North transformed fear through hope, while activists from the Global South coped with fear through a combination of hope, guilt, and anger (ibid., 507).

Figure 5 EXEMPLARY POLICY NARRATIVE EXPRESSING FEAR

*"The current situation on motorways is **frightening** and **unsafe**, since people can go as fast as they want. We need to set a speed limit to stop this irrational behaviour. "*

Source: Own elaboration. Emotion words in bold.

4.2.5 Suffering

The emotion category of suffering is related to the emotions of sadness, grief, and loss. Suffering was analysed as a single category in the emotion's thesaurus by Yordy et al. (2024), however in other studies by Fullerton et al. (2023) it is subsumed under the category of dismay. As suffering and related emotions of sadness, grief and loss appear as relevant in the context of climate policy, we treat it as a singular category. Emotion words associated with suffering in previous thesauri are 'loss', 'grieving', 'hurt', 'pain' (cf. Yordy et al., 2024).

According to Lazarus (1991) **sadness can be described as the result of a significant loss**. **Appraisal dimensions of sadness are *self-blame* and *uncontrollability***, which explicitly distinguish sadness from anger (Lewis 2008, 6). While sadness is associated with avoidant behaviour and demotivates social interaction, *grief*, according to Ojala et al. (2021, 38) is more actively connotated and can motivate struggle. In the context of climate change the term of ecological grief has been coined as "grief and sadness felt in response to the loss of beloved places, ecosystems, and species" (ibid., 37). Ecological grief can occur over physical ecological losses, over the loss of place-based identities or in anticipation of future losses (Cunsolo and Ellis 2018).

Especially in the context of low-carbon energy transitions with impacts on regions and local communities, such as coal phase-out or industrial transformation, emotions of individual or collective loss, grief, or suffering appear in the literature (Albrecht et al. 2007; Egan, Sherval, and Wright 2024; Hermwille et al. 2023; Martiskainen and Sovacool 2021). These experiences of suffering are often associated with changes in meaningful places and spaces that provide opportunities for collective identification and sense of belonging (Egan, Sherval, and Wright 2024; Hermwille et al. 2023).

A particular form of suffering described in the context of place-based changes is "Solastalgia". Albrecht et al. (2007, 95) define it in the context of climate change as "distress that is produced by environmental change impacting on people while they are directly connected to their home environment". The context and place-dependent emotion is related to low feelings of control and power. Solastalgia can be experienced either through changing environments due to climate change, but also caused by place-based changes due to energy-transitions (Albrecht et al. 2007; Martiskainen and Sovacool 2021).

Also, Antonova's (2023) extensive fieldwork draws on senses of place and belonging in citizen narratives in a UK coastal region in environmental transformation. The study highlights that citizen narratives of feeling "left behind" are linked to coastal communities' environmental meaning, to the changes their marine environment has undergone throughout changing marine governance (ibid 9f). In this regard, Antonova (2023) shows that the emotional relationship to places is also linked to feelings of social (in)equality.

Figure 6 EXEMPLARY POLICY NARRATIVE EXPRESSING SUFFERING

*"Every day, the relatives of car crash victims **suffer**. So, does the environment and the climate. A speed limit on highways is needed to protect them."*

Source: Own elaboration. Emotion words in bold.

4.2.6 Dismay

According to the emotion-words, that are linked to the concept of dismay[12], the emotion may be characterized as an **intense state of agitation, which is elicited by a negative valence**, an event that goes against the actors perceived goals such as the perception of an extreme form of violation of actor's norms and values.

Eventually the emotions of contempt or disgust can be linked to dismay, which both involve the social action tendency to reject others and avoid interaction (Redlawsk & Matthes 2022, 146). Both emotions are grouped to the category of moral emotions (Fink et al. 2023, 475).

Contempt is elicited by the perception that others are inferior, or by "violations of notions of proper behaviour in a community" (Fink et al. 2023, 475) and is a "trait-focused emotion centred on people and their incompetence" (Redlawsk & Mattes 2022, 146ff.). Disgust, however is seen as a response to "potential contamination", whereas the object of disgust can be human or non-human (Redlawsk & Mattes 2022, 146ff.). Actors see their norms of personal hygiene or other moral values endangered. Disgust motivates avoiding behaviour and activates information-seeking behaviour (Redlawsk & Mattes 2022, 147f.).

Fink et al. (2023, 486) observed, that scientific actors in policy consultations regarding electricity grid construction planning in Germany frequently employed words associated with contempt[13] to express criticism. When concrete power lines were mentioned, also emotion words associated with disgust were used, which expressed an emotional reaction towards the "perceived impact of the power line on the environment" (ibid., 483).

Figure 7 EXEMPLARY POLICY NARRATIVE EXPRESSING DISMAY

*"The government's **mind-blowing** proposition to introduce a speed limit on motor highways is a **suspicious** attempt to cover-up for their failure to address climate change."*

Source: Own elaboration. Emotion words in bold.

[12] See e.g. 'conflict', 'agitated', 'challenge', 'defeat', 'humiliate','oppressed' (Fullerton, Weible, and Gabehart 2023)
[13] This is the case in the emotion dictionary based on Klinger et al. (2016).

4.2.7 Compassion

Compassion has been defined as resulting from "witnessing another's suffering […] that motivates a subsequent desire to help" (Goetz, Keltner, and Simon-Thomas 2010, 351). Thus, compassion can be described as an **other-oriented emotion that is associated with a pro-social action tendency**. The appraisal dimensions of compassion are largely similar to those of anger: According to Goetz et al. (2010) the **suffering of another person is perceived as incongruent with the actor's goals and is important to the actor in terms of self-relevance**, either because the person suffering is a group member or because social norms are violated and the treatment is perceived as unfair. Compassion is also associated with high levels of control and agency. The main difference from anger is the lack of blame towards the suffering subject – instead the person or other suffering is perceived as deserving of support (ibid, 362). For this reason, Goetz et al. (2010, 362) stress the moral dimension involved in the appraisal of compassion, since "compassion appraisals include some judgment of fairness or justice".

Feelings of compassion in the context of climate change can also be directed towards the suffering of non-human agents, such as nature, ecosystems or animals (Neckel and Hasenfratz 2021, 262). Compassion here, as compassion for the environment, can be accompanied by feelings of love or grief (ibid).

We could not find studies, which analysed compassion in climate policy narratives and applied an NPF approach. In the context of climate policy, compassion has been studied mostly on the micro level. Using a survey experiment Lu and Schuldt (2016) found a positive effect of compassion appeals in climate policy communication on participant's support for governmental climate mitigation policies in the US. Similarly, Wamsler et al. (2023) observed that compassion may motivate personal engagement against climate change, based on an analysis of a representative national survey in Sweden.

Compassion can also be associated with group-oriented practices like solidarity, which are commonly found in social or climate movements. For instance, Bartenstein (2024) distinguishes six different types of climate solidarity within discourses of green and just transition in the European Union.

Figure 8 EXEMPLARY POLICY NARRATIVE EXPRESSING COMPASSION

*"By introducing a speed limit on motorways, we do not only **save** lives but also **protect** the climate."*

Source: Own elaboration. Emotion words in bold.

5 Conclusions

This working paper serves as a **conceptual foundation for studying emotions in policy narratives, based on appraisal theory**. It argued that an integration of appraisal theory from psychology helps to gain a deeper understanding and conceptualisation of the role of emotions within policy narratives, and within the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) in particular. This led to a **conceptual framework** (see figure 1) linking the emotion-process elements from appraisal theory with the narrative elements. This conceptual framework will be used as a joint reference point for the respective work in the CIDAPE Horizon Europe project[14], and we hope that it can contribute also to other on-going and future work on policy narratives and/or the role of emotions in public policy, particularly in climate policies and politics.

Further, we reviewed **different categories of emotions** through the lens of appraisal theory and discussed selected findings of their role in climate policy (section 4).[15] The selection of emotions was based on the emotions thesaurus for public policy developed by Yordy et al. (2024) and then Fullerton et al. (2023) and, leading us to consider seven distinct emotions: **affinity, compassion, confidence/trust, anger, dismay, fear, and suffering**. Research on emotions in NPF studies on climate policy is still emerging, so we included selected findings from different theoretical approaches as well. Additionally, research on some emotion categories was scarce in the field of climate policy. This likely has to do with our selected emotion categorization, since the emotion thesaurus for public policy (Fullerton et al. 2023) is relatively recent and geared towards a specific empirical application. Also, this may indicate the need for further research to explore, e.g. the role of compassion or dismay in the context of climate change. It remains important to keep in mind the key role of the context, in which distinct emotions are embedded (see, e.g. Yordy et al., 2024; Pierce et al., 2022). For instance, the contextuality of emotions may result in different action tendencies (cf. e.g. Ojala et al., 2021; Kleres & Wettergren, 2017).

When it comes to the **case of climate policies and environmental policies**, the literature has highlighted the key role of emotions for these fields, sometimes also with regard to policy narratives. A review of the literature on climate policy narratives and emotions revealed some interesting starting points for further research (see section 2).

To begin with, most NPF studies that attend to emotions and climate policy focus on characters and are set in the US-American context. As "emotional engine of policy stories" (Jones & Crow, 2017: 3), we assume that characters play a crucial role for eliciting emotional appraisals, in particular regarding the dimension of agency, i.e. whether someone is to blame for a situation (*villain*) or not (*victim*). Therefore, it would be useful to investigate also for the European context whether specific characters appear in climate policy narratives and to what extent they are associated with specific emotions. Also, the studies by Pierce et al. (2021; 2022) and Pattison et al. (2022) offer promising insights into the strategic use of emotions by coalitions as part of (coalitional) narrative strategies. Not least, there seems to be a lack of studies that investigate policy narratives at the connective field between climate policy and social inequalities, which seems particularly important, e.g. because climate issues have been highlighted in the context of 'affective polarization' (see, e.g. Rekker and Harteveld 2022). In the context of climate and inequality, particular attention should be paid to the narrative portrayal of the plot of (re)distributive policies – since increasingly climate policy issues are not only about regulation, but also about the central questions of 'who gets what and why' or 'who should pay' (see Blum & Kuhlmann, 2019; Kuhlmann & Blum, 2021).

[14] Climate, Inequality and Democratic Action: The Force of Political Emotions (see: https://cidape.eu/)

[15] The emotion categories developed in the emotion thesaurus by Yordy et al. (2024), and Fullerton et al. (2023) were derived in an inductive, empirical, and context-dependent manner. Consequently, to analyze emotions empirically within the European context of climate policy narratives and inequality in a next step it may be necessary to adjust some emotion words or categories.

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6 Appendix

Table 1: Emotion Categories and Appraisal Criteria

Emotion Category	**Novelty**: Is the event new and deserves my attention?	**Valence**: Do I perceive the event as pleasant or unpleasant?	**Goal relevance:** Is the event important to my goals?	**Agency**: Who caused the event?	**Control or power:** Can the event be controlled?	**Norms and values:** Does the event violate my norms and values?
Anger	Novel and worth of attention	Negative valence	Event are perceived as going against actor's goals (goal blocking)	Blame (target of emotion is considered to be responsible)	Individuals perceive that they can do something about the situation	Event violates social norms and values (unfairness)
Affinity (linked to hope, desire)	Novel and worth of attention	Positive valence	Events are perceived as conductive to actor's goals	Self / other	Individuals perceive that they can do something about the situation (high control potential)	Event confirms norms and values
Trust / Confidence	open	Positive valence	Positive expectation regarding another's future actions	Limited agency (uncertainty) and dependency	Event confirms norms and values (relations of acceptance and recognition)	Event confirms norms and values
Fear	Novel and worth of attention	Negative valence	Event perceived as threat against actors' goals	Blame attribution, however responsibility is uncertain	Individuals perceive that they cannot do something about the situation (unpredictability and uncertainty)	-
Suffering	Low degree of novelty	Negative valence/ open valence	Event are perceived as going against actor's goals (goal blocking)	Self-blame (or other blame)	Individuals perceive that they cannot do something about the situation (uncontrollability)	-

Dismay (linked to contempt, disgust)	Novel and worth of attention	Negative valence	Event are perceived as going against actor's goals (goal blocking)	Blame (target of emotion is considered to be responsible)	Individuals perceive that they can do something about the situation	Event violates social norms and values (immorality or inferiority of others) e.g. contempt
Compassion	Novel and worth of attention	Negative valence	Events are perceived as relevant to self; event goes against actor's goals (since persons perceived as familiar are suffering)	No blame (target of emotion is not considered to be responsible)	Individuals perceive that they can do something about the situation	Event violates social norms and values (unfairness)

Source: own presentation based on Barbalet, 1998; Barbalet, 2009; Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Goetz et al., 2010; Hoffmann in Lewis 2008; Fink et al., 2023, 475ff; Fullerton et al., 2023; Kuhlmann & Starke, 2023; Ojala et al.,2021; Pierce et al., 2022; Scherer & Moors, 2019; Redlawsk & Matthes 2019; Yordy et al., 2024.