



Nuclear Policy Storylistening Exercise

Workshop

DAY 1: Wednesday 29th March

funded by the University of Cambridge Arts and Humanities Impact Fund



Welcome

Why are we here?

“To demonstrate how [storylistening](#) can inform decision-making, and to provide insights for today’s decision-makers in nuclear policy. To do so by collaboratively exploring how the interplay of stories and policy with respect to nuclear weapons and nuclear safety informed decision-making in the past, and by drawing out the implications of stories for current and future policy decisions.”



Welcome

What are we going to do?

Today

Recap on storylistening and the nuclear case study

Session 1: Framings and points of view

Session 2: Identities

Session 3: Modelling and systems

Tomorrow

Session 4: Anticipation

Creating the headlines and structure

Fleshing out the arguments

Considering next steps



Welcome

Who are we?

.... the one nuclear story (remembering that it can be any kind of story) that you would most like every political nuclear decision-maker to have imbibed, and come ready to say why (in one sentence) during the introductory session on Wednesday.



Welcome

How will we do it?

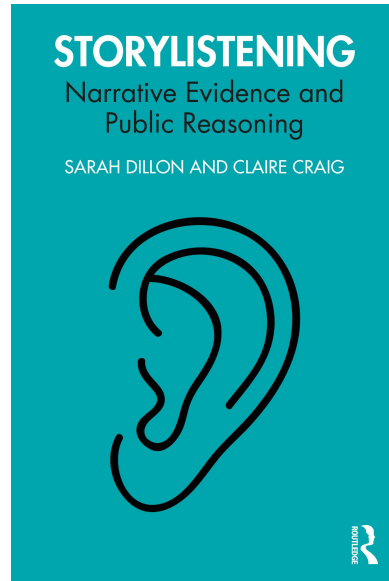
Interdisciplinary and intersectoral enquiry: no question too simple

Open (“unclassified”) debate, acknowledging partially secret nature of the topic

Chatham House Rule? (material can be used, but not attributed)

No social media? (creating a safe space for speculation, admitting ignorance and changing your mind)

Other?



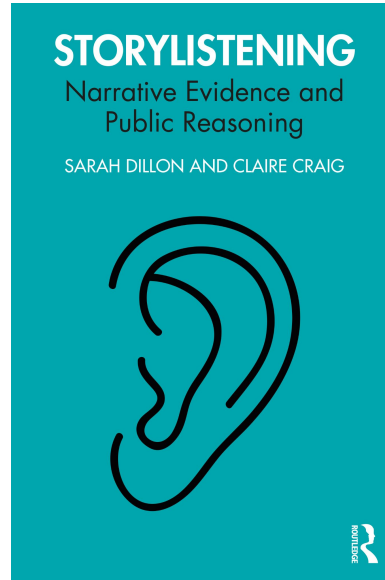
Storylistening is.....



The theory and practice of
gathering narrative evidence
to inform decision-making

especially in relation to
public reasoning

always as part of
a pluralistic
evidence base



Listening, not telling

Cognitive, not affective

Collective, not individual

Stories, like so many other types of evidence, are a form of
sense-making in the face of complexity and uncertainty.

A new conceptual and practical framework: the four functions of stories



Provide new **points of view** (framing)



A new conceptual and practical framework: the four functions of stories



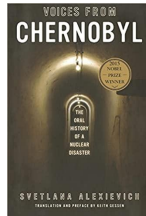
Provide new **points of view** (framing)



Create and expose **collective identities**

“There is never the slightest hint that there could in the public realm be the basis of alternative forms of public knowledge, and order, from those given in existing forms of instrumental expertise.”

Brian Wynne, May the Sheep Safely Graze, Risk, Environment and Modernity, 1996



A new conceptual and practical framework: the four functions of stories



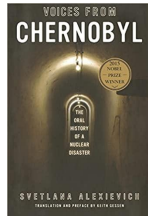
Provide new **points of view** (framing)



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Inform and act as **models**



‘it stands to reason that such conceptualisations, which tend to be more available to the general public than scientific information, play an important role in the selection and evaluation of risks’ (Ursula K. Heise (2008: 137)

A new conceptual and practical framework: the four functions of stories



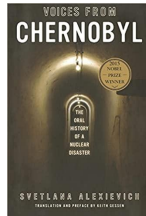
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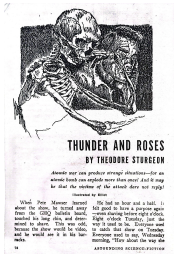
Inform and act as **models**



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Enable new and rigorous **anticipations**

As in the past there will be a stream of speculative scenarios and anxious warnings, along with sudden demands for new thinking in the face of an unexpected development. Whether couched in the language of earnest academic papers, military appreciations or fictional thrillers, these will all be works of imagination. [...] They will often have value in helping to clarify the choices that need to be faced and at times will even turn out to have been prescient. For that reason many will deserve to be taken seriously. (Freedman 2017: 287)





Why are we here? Reprised

“To demonstrate how [storylistening](#) can inform decision-making, and to provide insights for today’s decision-makers in nuclear policy. To do so by collaboratively exploring how the interplay of stories and policy with respect to nuclear weapons and nuclear safety informed decision-making in the past, and by drawing out the implications of stories for current and future policy decisions.”

and

“To develop proof of concept processes, reports and toolkits that demonstrate practically how a storylistening exercise can happen, taking an existing policy issue and - using the four functions as a framework - synthesising narrative evidence from listening to existing stories associated with the issue, which can then form part of a pluralistic evidence, base to inform public reasoning.”



Session 1 - Framings and Points of View

Table 1	2	3	4
Matthew Jones	Tom McKane	Claire Craig	Sarah Dillon
Elena Violaris	Alex Tasker		Sarah Woods
Jon Agar	David Banks	Laura Rose Brown	Peter Busch
Daniel Cordle	Suzanne Doyle	Alexander Evans	Michael Gardiner
Grace Halden	Daniel Grausam	Matthew Grant	Jonathan Hogg
Paul Ingram	Damian O'Doherty	Egle Rindzeviciute	Paul Schulte
Chris Spedding	Peter Waring	Peter Watkins	Adam Wright



Session 1 - Framings and Points of View

Chair: Matthew Jones

Stimulus Authors:

Suzanne Doyle and Daniel Cordle

Session 1 Breakout Groups Questions - Framings and Points of View

Q1: Drawing on the practitioner interviews, and practitioner experience in the room, what are the dominant framings and PoV for nuclear policy decision-makers today? What are the narrative deficits, and risks associated with the dominant framings?

Q2: Drawing on all the stimulus papers and academic expertise in the room, what were the dominant framings and PoVs' during the 20th century? How did these inform events (including events that didn't happen)?

Q3: Using the collective intelligence in the room, what new framings and PoVs need to be explored further to better inform public reasoning now?



Session 2 - Identities

Table 1	2	3	4
Matthew Jones	Tom McKane	Claire Craig	Sarah Dillon
Elena Violaris	Alex Tasker	Sarah Woods	
Peter Busch	Jon Agar	David Banks	Laura Rose
Daniel Cordle	Suzanne Doyle	Alexander Evans	Michael Gardiner
Jonathan Hogg	Grace Halden	Daniel Grausman	Matthew Grant
Paul Ingram	Damian O'Doherty	Egle Rindzeviciute	Paul Schulte
Adam Wright	Chris Spedding	Peter Waring	Peter Watkins



Session 2 - Identities

Chair: Tom McKane

Stimulus Authors:

Matthew Grant and Jon Hogg

Session 2 Breakout Groups Questions - Identities

Q1: Drawing on the practitioner interviews, and practitioner experience in the room, what are the narratives that cohere the dominant collective and individual identities of nuclear decision-makers today? What are the narrative norms and narrative lock-ins, and risks associated with them?

Q2: Drawing on all the stimulus papers and academic expertise in the room, what were the narratives that cohered the dominant collective and individual identities during the 20th century? What were the narrative norms and narrative locks-ins then? How did these inform events (including events that didn't happen)?

Q3: Using the collective intelligence in the room, to better inform public reasoning now, what new collective identities (and the narratives that constitute them) need to be considered in anticipations? How might narratives within existing groups need to change?



Session 3 - Modelling and systems

Table 1	2	3	4
Matthew Jones	Tom McKane	Claire Craig	Sarah Dillon
Elena Violaris	Alex Tasker	Sarah Woods	
Peter Busch	Jon Agar	David Banks	Laura Rose
Michael Gardiner	Alexander Evans	Daniel Cordle	Suzanne Doyle
Daniel Grausam	Grace Halden	Matthew Grant	Jonathan Hogg
Egle Rindzeviciute	Paul Schulte	Paul Ingram	Damian O'Doherty
Adam Wright	Chris Spedding	Peter Waring	Peter Watkins



Session 3 - Modelling and Systems

Chair: Alex Tasker

Stimulus Authors:

Eglė Rindzevičiūtė

Christopher Laucht (video)

Session 3 Breakout Groups Questions - Modelling and Systems

Q1: Drawing on the practitioner interviews, and practitioner experience in the room, what are the dominant models for nuclear policy decision-makers today? What are the risks associated with these models, and what new models or types of model are most needed?

Q2: Drawing on all the stimulus papers and academic expertise in the room, what were the dominant models available in the 20th century? How did these inform events (including events that didn't happen)? Given what happened, what other models or types of models might have been desirable?

Q3: Using the collective intelligence in the room, what new models and types of models need to be explored further to better inform public reasoning now?



Wrap up

How has it gone so far, and thoughts for tomorrow?

Today

Recap on storylistening and the nuclear case study

Session 1: Framings and points of view

Session 2: Identities

Session 3: Modelling and systems

Tomorrow

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Considering next steps



Nuclear Policy Storylistening Exercise

Workshop

DAY 2: Thursday 30th March

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Back/Forecasting Groups



Grp.			
A	David Banks	Matthew Jones	Matthew Grant
B	Susanne Doyle	Jon Hogg	Jon Agar
C	Dan Cordle	Sarah Dillon	Michael Gardiner
D	Grace Halden	Dan Grausam	Elena Violaris
E	Paul Ingram	Tom McKane	Paul Schulte
F	Peter Waring	Claire Craig	Adam Wright
G	Sarah Woods	Laura Rose Brown	
H	Chris Spedding	Egle Rindzeviciute	Alex Tasker



Welcome to Day 2

What did we do yesterday and what happens today?

Today

Recap on storylistening and the nuclear case study

Session 1: Framings and points of view

Session 2: Identities

Session 3: Modelling and systems

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Session 4 - Anticipation

Chair: Sarah Dillon



Backcasting (from a future endstate, to the present)	Forecasting (from a time that may be a counterfactual past or present, or near future)
1. Deterrence is defunded	2. Small nuclear devices become widely available to the public.
3. Tactical nuclear weapons become normalised as part of conventional warfare.	4. [Counterfactual] During WWII, the USSR secures all European nuclear expertise and is the first to develop and deploy nuclear weapons.
5. Over the next twenty years there is sustained and incremental increases in climate change resulting in large uninhabitable areas, hostile environments and mass migration.	6. In January 2024, there is a global economic crash triggering a prolonged Depression.
7. Humankind has moved underground.	8. Off-world living becomes a possibility.



For all scenarios...

What led to this (backcasting) OR what happens next (forecasting)? If the scenario is not directly focused on nuclear, include the consequences for / trajectory of nuclear within the scenario.

What are the signal points that indicate a trajectory towards that outcome (backcasting) or on a future trajectory (forecasting)?

What narratives play a role in movement between these signal points?

Group	Session 1 (Backcasting)	Session 2 (Forecasting)		Session 3 (Backcasting)	Session 4 (Forecasting)
A	1	2		5	6
B	1	2		5	6
C	1	4		5	8
D	1	4		5	8
E	3	2		7	6
F	3	2		7	6
G	3	4		7	8
H	3	4		7	8



Report Writing Groups

1	David Banks	Matthew Jones	Matthew Grant
	Susanne Doyle	Jon Hogg	Jon Agar
2	Dan Cordle	Sarah Dillon	Michael Gardiner
	Grace Halden	Dan Grausam	Elena Violaris
3	Paul Ingram	Tom McKane	Paul Schulte
	Peter Waring	Claire Craig	Adam Wright
4	Sarah Woods	Laura Rose Brown	
	Chris Spedding	Egle Rindzevičiūtė	Alex Tasker



Headlines and structure of the report

for debate

How stories about and stories from the 20thC shape the present

Why some (elements of) dominant stories might need challenging

The low visibility of nuclear today

New kinds of (useful) stories

Implications (of the report for readers)



Headlines and structure of the report (1/2)

How stories about and stories from the 20thC shape the present

- **Nuclear exceptionalism**
- **Dominance of the strategic and apocalyptic**
- **Small number of nation state actors**
- **National pride**
- **Ebb and flow of interest (WW2, 1980s)**
- **Generational changes and knowledge lost**

Why some (elements of) dominant stories might need challenging

- **The impossibility of proving deterrence works**
- **The increased number and type of potential actors**
- **Rise of other types of WMD**
- **Relationship to nuclear energy in a post-carbonworld**



Headlines and structure of the report (2/2)

The low visibility of nuclear today

- Low levels of general or elite discourse (india pakistan)
- Some strongly demarcated collective identities, especially locked into deterrence and exceptionalism framing (UK)
- Competition for time in decision-making and debate (general pressures, competition for worry and preparedness of avoidance actions - climate, pandemics)

New kinds of (useful) stories, a refresh?

- “*Threads* for the 21st C” (a new (non-apocalyptic) “boundary object”)
- Lower nuclear access thresholds
- Out of the corner of your eye (climate narratives etc)

IMPLICATIONS (of the report for readers)

- Capabilities needed (skills, tech investments)
- Preparedness in all its forms
- Nation state narratives



Tasks

Given the draft structure and subheads

- What other arguments or points should be included
- What evidence is available, where relevant
- What stories best illustrate the arguments

Each group will spend 15 minutes at each table, working on the assigned section(s) at that table



Feedback and what's missing

Final thoughts

Gaps to fill

Ideas for engagement

Timeline and next steps

THANK YOU