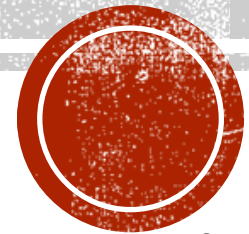


A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF POLICY FOR ACCESS TO AND ACTIVE OFFER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN AN OFFICIAL MINORITY LANGUAGE:

What is discourse analysis, and why do it?



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OUTLINE

- What is discourse analysis, as opposed to other types of policy analysis?
- What kinds of questions can it address?
 - Case study: the Montfort Hospital
- Methods and tools
- Relevance for policy and for practice



STYLES OF POLICY ANALYSIS (SHAW, 2010)

1. Comprehensive rationalist:

- Behavioural, rationalist and positivist. Social problems deserve rational political responses
- Separation of policy from politics. Use quantitative and quasi-experimental approaches to search for generalizable findings
 - E.g. evidence-based policy
 - E.g. systematic reviews

Shaw, S. (2010). Reaching the parts that other theories and methods can't reach: How and why a policy-as-discourse approach can inform health-related policy. *Health*, 14: 196



STYLES OF POLICY ANALYSIS (SHAW, 2010)

2. Political rationalist:

- Policy as complex, and about relationships between e.g. politicians and interest groups, industry, and other influencers
- Policy as muddling through, and negotiated, as opposed to linear
 - E.g. 'policy network' approach
 - Mixed methods, interviews , case studies



WHY DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

3. *Policy as discourse:*

- Particular policy problems are identified and solutions are suggested all through language. Discourse frames the problem as well as the range of possible solutions. It allows certain people a voice and quiets others
- Discourse analysis can then highlight how power relations are legitimated and challenged in the policy process
- Sets all this within a specific social, economic, cultural and political context
- Qualitative, reflexive methodologies



WHAT TYPES OF QUESTIONS?

- Central questions of this study:
 - What are relationship of access, including tools like active offer, to governance of institutions for official language communities in minority contexts?
- This study seeks to place active offer in relation to:
 - (Recent) history of bilingualism, e.g. Official Languages Act (1969, 1899, 2005), French Language Service Act (ON) (1986)
 - The intersection of bilingualism policy and health care policy
 - Evolution of access to health and social services for Ontario's francophone community
 - Relationship of those practices to governance, including regional and provincial law and policy



WHAT TYPES OF QUESTIONS? WHAT KIND OF DATA?

- Special focus on the Montfort crisis:
 - Restructuring commission, Tribunals, SOS Montfort movement, and interviews with hospital management.
 - The role of the hospital in terms of offering health care and social services in French in a minority context:
 - *What does it mean to be a francophone institution?*
- Data include legal and policy texts at the federal, provincial and regional (e.g. Champlain) level, as well as documents produced by major groups supporting health of OL minority communities e.g. SSF, focusing on the adoption of the French Language Services Act in 1986 to present
- Interviews with key stakeholders from each of those groups



HAJER'S (2006) 10 STEPS OF DOING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

1. Desk Research – a first reading of events
2. ‘Helicopter Interviews’ –an overview from different perspectives
3. Document Analysis – to identify story lines and metaphors, and the sites of discursive struggle
4. Interviews with key players – to enable the researcher to construct the interviewee discourses
5. Sites of argumentation – search the data to account for the argumentative exchange
6. Analyze for positioning effects – to show how people, institutions or nation-states get caught up in dialogue
7. Identify key incidents – to understand the discursive dynamics and the outcomes
8. Analysis of practices in particular cases of argumentation – relating the meaning of what is said to the practices in which it was said
9. Interpretation –an account of the discursive structures, practices, and sites of production
10. Second visit to key actors – respondents should recognize some of the hidden structures of language.

THREE TOOLS FOR IDENTIFYING DISCOURSES (HAJER, 2005)

- Metaphor
 - two or three word phrases which symbolize the key ideas of the discourse: “climate change”, or “access to services”
- Storyline
 - Story that encapsulates the discourse using the metaphors
 - Actors use the storylines in communication
- Discourse coalition
 - Group of actors who use the same storyline



HOW TO IDENTIFY AND ANALYZE DISCOURSES (PARKER, 1992)

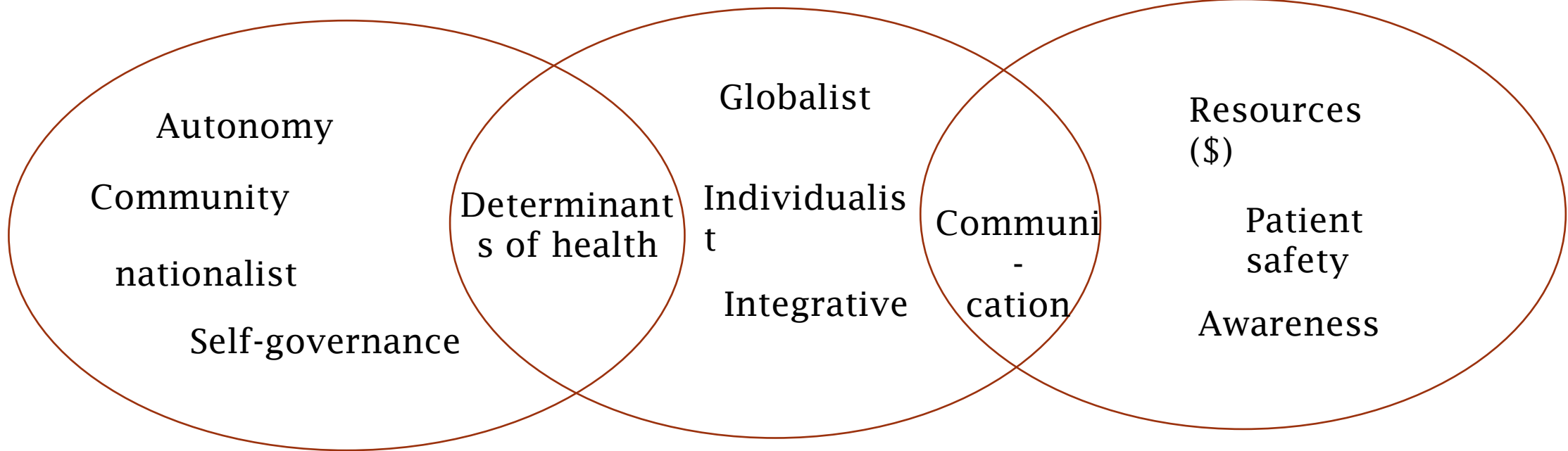
- A discourse is realized in texts
- A discourse is about objects
- A discourse contains subjects
- A discourse is a coherent system of meaning
- A discourse refers to other discourses
- A discourse reflects on its own way of speaking
- A discourse is historically located

Above are necessary and sufficient, but analysis should also focus on how:

- Discourses support institutions
- Discourses reproduce power
- Discourses have ideological effects



SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS



Community vitality

Access to services in French

Access to health services



RELEVANCE FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

- “...explicitly embrace the political realities in which such ‘big’ problems are grounded (and that a rationalist framework tends to obstruct), incorporate the complex (and ultimately inescapable) sets of questions regarding the construction of policy... and ease the process by which a range of political values are translated into changes in society.” (Shaw 2010, p. 201)
- This analysis will offer a broader and more critical perspective to questions of access to health care and social services by identifying unexamined barriers,
- And identifying counter discourses through which alternate perspectives can be articulated.



THANK YOU – REMERCIEMENTS

l'Institut de recherche de l'hôpital Montfort

