

‘Multi-actors governance in megaprojects: narrative as governance instruments’

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As complex systems (Van Slyke 2018) that entail multiple actors (Park et al.2017), megaprojects stimulate debates and controversies about their implementation (Flyvbjerg 2017; Levitt & Scott 2017; Van Marrewijk et al. 2016; Clamen & Macfarlane 2015), the effects they will have on community, society, and environment (Brookes & Locatelli 2015; Flyvbjerg 2014). In reality, megaprojects are uncertain and muddle through with risks (Eppel & Rhodes 2018), mainly because of the stories and images about the positive contribution of megaprojects (Cousins 2019). Information is an integral part of the stories, which trigger variable impacts on megaprojects (Bent Flyvbjerg. B, Bruzelius. N & Rothengatter. W, 2003), information can be communicated across actors through different instruments, narrative is one of those instruments, which trigger actions and debates (Esposito et al. 2022; Ninan & Sergeeva 2022; Gray & Jones 2016).

Examining narratives in link with megaprojects is a burgeoning literature (see Esposito et al. 2022; Ninan & Sergeeva 2022; J.Ninan & N.Sergeeva 2021). Former research acknowledges that dialectics (Renault 2016) as well as institutional frameworks (Biesenthal et al.2018) are central to megaprojects. Nonetheless, little is known about the significance of narratives to shape cognitive and normative spheres about megaprojects. This is an underexplored lacuna, which we address in this paper, by asking: *How do multiple actors mobilise narratives in different*

institutional contexts to govern megaprojects? How do those narratives affect megaprojects in two different institutional contexts?

To address this question we build on institutional theory and governance literature through a dialectical perspective analysis. More precisely, we investigate the narratives in terms of its types and effect on megaprojects. shaping the belief systems of actors, and therefore trigger collective action, which could promote or contest megaprojects. We conceive narratives in this context as governance instruments that are key to delineate interests. However, the type of narratives and the institutional context become at play in shaping different effects.

The Lyon-Turin megaproject is our empirical setting. Lyon-Turin is a transnational megaproject (Ariemma & Burnside-Lawry, 2016; Esposito, Terlizzi, & Crutzen 2020) embedded in different, but interconnected, jurisdictional environments (i.e. France, Italy and EU) and organizational units (i.e. supra-national authorities, national government administrations, firms and local civil society).

We argue that the type of policy narrative style shapes the belief system and affects the actions in a particular institutional context. We explain how narratives, in this case the narrative style, influences megaprojects implementation, which in turn shape the belief system, and eventually influence the collective action of local communities and citizens.

Our paper extends previous studies that investigated the regulative institutional shaping of megaprojects (Esposito et al, 2021). Precisely, our paper seeks to establish a relation between the type of narratives, as governance instruments, the shaping of the belief systems and the collective

actions towards megaprojects. Embedding context, including the economic status, political structures and political climate, including the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), are significant factors that mediate the type of narratives constructed and the impact of the narratives on megaprojects.

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