Narrating precarious housing

An analysis of political narratives surrounding temporary rental contracts in the Netherlands

Protest banner 'renters are not interchangeable' on the Stationsflat in Leiden (Van Bommel, 2022)

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Abstract

The share of precarious housing, defined as temporary rental contracts in this study, has been growing gradually over the past decades in the Netherlands. Several negative effects came along with the opening up of legal possibilities for these contracts, such as mental health issues for renters and decreased neighborhood livability. However, in the more recent years, criticism on the rise of temporary rental contracts has been growing, leading to a policy shift, partly limiting the legal possibilities to offer temporary contracts again. Therefore this research focuses on the period 2015 to 2023, in which this shift has happened. It aims to explore the context in which decisions are made, and by what decisions are informed and legitimized. Two strands of research are used for this: first narratives surrounding temporary rental contracts within the political context are uncovered: by analyzing debates held in the House of Representatives through the lens of the *narrative policy framework*. Secondly, policy change theory is used to help understand the policy shift currently happening in 2023.

In total five narratives are uncovered which can be subdivided into 'in favor of temporary rent' and 'against temporary rent'. Further results of this study include the important role that ideology plays in narrative construction, as well as in who is narrating what narrative. However, the role of ideology in policy has decreased after the policy shift, making more room for evidence-based policy. Two focusing events can be pointed out as catalyzing the policy alteration on the topic of temporary rental contracts: (1) evaluations and academic research published on the negative effects of temporary rent, and a stronger relationship of new policy to these. (2) The broader recent shift in Dutch housing politics and policy which can be characterized as *post-neoliberal*.

Key words

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Eng. = when a Dutch term is translated into English
MSA = Multiple Streams Approach
NPF = Narrative Policy Framework

Prologue

Leading up to the topic of this master thesis was an eye-opening course that I took during my bachelor's on narrative and myth in society, combine that with my interest in housing and politics and you have the master thesis now in front of you! "Well everything is political right?" a professor once replied when my project group expressed the concern of becoming 'too political'. This seemingly simple sentence stuck with me while I was starting to think about a topic for my master thesis. Therefore I thought it would be fitting to take one of the centers of Dutch politics as focus for this study. While working on my thesis my fascination and interest in these topics only grew more and despite the long hours in UCG, the UB, Zernike and the Forum, I am glad to say that I enjoyed working on this thesis.

As I am finishing up this master's thesis, I am one step closer to finishing a chapter in my own life. I would like to thank everyone that helped me with my thesis, directly or indirectly. My supervisor, Christian Lamker, Carla Huisman for an inspiring talk and helping to give direction to my initial ideas, those that took their time to proof-read, and finally my friends for providing (the sometimes very necessary) distraction.

I hope you enjoy reading this thesis!

"Oral narrative, or what we call storytelling in everyday speech, is as much around us as the air we breathe, although we often take its casual forms so much for granted that we are scarcely aware of them." (Niles, 1999, p. 1)

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Preceding this study

The Netherlands has a longstanding history of rental protection after the second world war. However, in line with the increasing financialization and flexibilization of the housing market, rental protection has very gradually been decreasing (Huisman, 2016). Huisman (2016) argues that the silent shift and very gradual development towards eroding permanency as the norm and decreasing rental protection, starting in the 1980's, has allowed for the rather uncontroversial introduction of more exceptions to the norm permanency and finally the introduction of generic temporary rental contracts in 2016 (Huisman, 2016; Wigger, 2021). With finally temporary rental contracts being seen and used as an instrument for structural housing market reform (Huisman, 2016)

Since Huisman's study (2016), much has changed in discourse on temporary rental contracts. Temporary rental contracts have since then become a more controversial topic. Debate in academia, society and politics has increased since 2016, going hand in hand with the increasing housing shortage and 'crisis' in the Netherlands. With for example major Dutch news outlets covering issues that temporary rental contracts and general precarious renting can cause (see for example: Kamphuis, 2020 in NOS; Obbink, 2022 in Trouw; Obbink et al., 2020 in Trouw; Segaar, 2019 in RTL). In line with Huisman's (2016) concern, temporary contracts indeed have become the norm for new rental agreements, in 2021 74% of private landlords indicated that they made use of temporary rental contracts (Companen, 2021). In line with this shift in discourse, for the first time since the lifting of legal restrictions on temporary rental contracts, limits have been imposed again in 2023.

This study aims to explore the context in which this shift has happened and is happening, building upon the work of Huisman (2016), studying narratives from 2015 up until (the first half of) 2023, to gain a better understanding on the context of policy change. On what evidence, promises and arguments is political discourse based? This is studied through the lens of narratives and the *narrative policy framework* which assumes that (simplified) policy stories that are told about (societal) issues, play an important role in policy and political decision making (Jones & McBeth, 2010; Jones, 2018; Jones et al., 2022).

Previous research within the theme of precarious housing has focussed on the effects that it has on the life of renters (see e.g.: Listerborn, 2021; McKee & Soaita, 2018; McKee et al., 2019; Wigger, 2021) and narratives on non-generic temporary housing (see: Severinsen & Howden-Chapman,

2013). Furthermore, research also has been conducted on the relationship between discourse in politics and the topic of housing (see: Bierre and Howden-Chapman, 2017; Heslop & Ormerod, 2019; Marston, 2000; Marston, 2002; White & Nandedkar, 2019).

This study aims to fill this gap relating these three elements of precarious housing, narrative and national politics. By dissecting different problems and solutions which temporary contracts are framed as being a part of.

1.2 Relevance of this study

Firstly, this study touches upon the societal dimension: the negative effects that precarious renting can have on renters have been widely recognized in academic research and policy evaluation. These effects are partly on the individual level: people might postpone important life events and choices, such as having children and moving in together (Companen, 2021; Huisman, 2016). Previous research also has shown negative effects on mental health such as stress, because of living in insecure and uncertain conditions (Companen, 2021; McKee & Soaita, 2018; McKee et al., 2019). Furthermore, renters are confronted with decreased rental protection, and are afraid to complain as this might lead to termination of their contracts (Companen, 2021). This can also have adverse effects on physical health, by living in housing with issues such as mold, leakage and bad isolation. As both renters and landlords know that the stay is only temporary, issues such as these are less likely to be fixed.

But negative effects do not only stay on the individual level. Temporary rental contracts catalyze rent increase, research has shown that rent between two renters increases 6% on average (Companen, 2021). Although rent regulation in the private sector is currently increased with the law 'goed verhuurderschap' (Eng.: good landlordship), previously this mechanism caused very steep rent increases over time, as 2-year contracts allowed for rent increase every 2 years. Therefore temporary renters also bear an increasing financial burden.

Finally this precarisation of the rental market has a bad effect on the liveability of neighborhoods. Tenants are less likely to invest in their neighborhood by caring for their environment and forming bonds with their neighbors as they know that they will be leaving soon anyways. This especially becomes problematic when a large share of housing in the neighborhood is rented out temporarily (Companen, 2021).

So if these negative effects that temporary contracts can have, are known, why are legal restrictions on them being loosened by the central government? To gain a better understanding of policy making, its dynamics and policy change, the study of its language is useful (Stone, 2002). Therefore this study utilizes the narrative policy framework (NPF), wherein policy making and policy discourse is

approached from a narrative perspective (McBeth & Lybecker, 2018; Jones & McBeth, 2010; Jones et al., 2022). This framework is applied to debates held in the House of Representatives of Dutch parliament on temporary contracts between 2015 and the first half of 2023.

Therefore, secondly, this study aims to add to the academic debate, and more precisely the NPF. This framework has previously often been applied in the context of environmental planning and on smaller/more regional governmental levels, furthermore, combination with other theories of policy processes remain limited (Jones, 2018; Schlaufer et al., 2022). Therefore this study aims to add further insight in the application of the NPF in nation-level political debate and debate on housing issues. Furthermore this study aims to further build upon and strengthen the link between the NPF, and policy change theory (see: McBeth & Lybecker, 2018; Peterson & Jones, 2016).

Finally, this study aims to stress the role that narratives can play in policy making, in order to further increase awareness of this for policy and decision makers. To promote a critical stance towards narrative, and the framing of problems and solutions.

The central research questions in this research are the following:

1. *How have narratives and their narrators on temporary rental contracts in the Netherlands changed, evolved and adapted between 2015 and 2023?*
2. *How do these narratives and their dynamics relate to policy change?*

In order to answer this question, first six sub questions are answered,

SQ1: What is the issue that temporary rental contracts should solve according to the identified narratives?
SQ2: Who are the actors and factors and what role are they assigned in the narratives?
SQ3: What are the main and counter narratives identified?
SQ4: How do the identified narratives relate to their narrative representatives?
SQ5: How does argumentation within the narrative relate to evidence and evaluation?
SQ6: How do policy and narrative dynamics on temporary rental contracts relate to policy change theory?

1.3 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is further structured as follows: in chapter 2, further theoretical background will be discussed. First the topic is situated in the broader debate on housing, financialization and precarisation, then the Dutch legal context is discussed. Then a deep dive is taken into policy narratives in politics and their narrative elements. This chapter finishes with policy change theory, and finally the three hypotheses, including a visualized conceptual framework.
In chapter 3 the NPF as a methodological tool is further discussed. Then research considerations and ethics are discussed. This chapter is concluded with a detailed description of data collection, coding and its subsequent analysis.
In chapter 4 the results are presented. These results take the form of the five uncovered narratives, their problem construction, moral of the story and characters, answering SQ 1, 2 and 3. The results section is concluded with the presence that the narratives have in debate throughout the years.
These narratives are further analyzed and discussed in chapter 5. Including the relation of narratives to narrators, answering SQ4. Then for each narrative it is discussed how narrative content changes and how they relate to evidence, answering SQ5. To answer SQ6 narratives and their dynamics are discussed in relation to policy theory.
The conclusion of this research can be found in chapter 6, including recommendations for further research.
Finally, in chapter 7 a reflection upon this study, its relevance, limitations and recommendations are discussed.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1 Housing in a neoliberal age

'Housing for people or for profit?', is a central question in Dutch and international political debate on housing. From the late 1980s onwards, housing policy has further shifted away from 'volkshuisvesting' (Eng.: public housing) towards having a 'housing market' (Van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2020; Huisman, 2016; Wigger, 2021). Public housing in the Netherlands has been further decentralized from the welfare state, giving more space to the market. An increasing emphasis was put on 'doorstroom' (Eng.: the moving of houses/throughput, in this context from public housing towards renting in the private sector or buying one's own house instead of renting in the public sector), and those living in public housing who are not the target group (i.e. having a lower income) were labeled as 'scheefwoners' (Eng. individuals living 'skewed') (Huisman & Mulder, 2022). Finally in 2015 a housing act was passed in the Netherlands that restricted housing corporations to only do their 'core job': supplying housing to those that really need it (ie. people with a lower income) (Van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2020). Moreover, the landlord levy was installed, leaving less financial room for housing corporations to invest in their existing and new buildings (Beekers, 2010; Van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2020). Creating more room for the market to function as it should function, was the core thought behind this. Further illustrating this 'housing for profit' paradigm shift in politics and society, is how foreign investors were purposefully attracted to the Netherlands to invest in housing in order to rent them out (Van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2020). The Netherlands was marketed as appealing to invest in, with the prospect of future rent increases in combination with the possibility to offer temporary rental contracts (Aalbers et al., 2020).

This shift from the 'housing for people' paradigm towards the 'housing for profit' paradigm, has had several negative outcomes, mainly for renters and seekers. These include increasing waiting times for public housing, increased rents in the private sector and an overall shortage of affordable housing. Furthermore, the housing market and its differentiation between owner-occupation and rental housing has become an engine for further social inequality (Boelhouwer, 2019; Van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2020).

Interesting is the more recent shift in housing debate, in the wake of the increasing housing shortage, decreasing affordability and its subsequent 'housing crisis' in the Netherlands, this explicit attracting of foreign investors and general financialization of the housing market is currently being heavily debated in politics, with cities banning investors buying up housing (De Hoop (PvdA) in integral vision

on the housing market, 03/06/2021, p.10). This shift is further illustrated by the reinstatement of a minister for housing and planning, and the introduction of further reaching rent regulation in the private sector with the law 'goed verhuurderschap' (Eng.: good landlordship), which further increases governmental control on the housing market. This shift, which can be characterized as *post-neoliberal*, is also noted by Hochstenbach (2023), who argues that it illustrates the increasing tension between liberalization of the housing market on the one hand and interests of the middle class on the other hand. Nevertheless, attracting investors to build new housing is still seen as one of the main cures for the issues of shortage on the Dutch housing market (Minister De Jonge (CDA) in integral vision on the housing market, 19/02/2023, p. 17; Hochstenbach, 2023).

2.2 Precarisation

The financialization of housing also has led to a decreased level of rental protection in the Netherlands, fuelling precarisation on the rental market. Generally, precariousness can both be understood as the absence of security (e.g., homelessness) as well as the uncertainty that vulnerability that social relations cause (e.g. the dependence of a renter on the landlord that they are renting from) (Carr et al., 2018). Consequences of being precariously housed include the feelings of vulnerability, exclusion and neglect, and might affect the health, social relations and job opportunities of individuals (Listerborn, 2021).

Neoliberalization and profit-drivenness fuel the demand for further flexibilization of society. On the Dutch housing market this trend also can be noticed. Possibilities to offer temporary rental contracts have been opening up over the past thirty years, in the form of property-guardianship, target-group contracts and finally generic temporary contracts (Huisman, 2016). Noteworthy is that the increasing opening up of legal possibilities, is often not rooted in evaluation of previous policy on temporary contracts (ibid.). According to Huisman (2016), the process of precarisation on the Dutch rental housing market manifests and develops itself through three processes. The first is the widening of legal grounds upon which these temporary contracts are allowed, the second is the non-enforcements of rules and regulations surrounding rental housing, and the third is the increasing discursive framing of renting as a service for socially disadvantaged people.
The Netherlands is not alone in the process towards precarity, in many advanced-economies precarious jobs and housing are on the rise (Waldron, 2022; Huisman & Mulder, 2022). Renting in precarious conditions is the norm in countries such as the UK, the US and Australia, furthermore property guardianship is for example also present in the UK, Belgium, Ireland, France and Germany (Ferreri et al., 2016; Huisman & Mulder, 2022).

This demand for more flexibility is coming from those already in power while often negatively affecting those dependent on people in power. For those dependent on power, renting temporarily becomes more a question of *the willingness to accept* rather than actually preferring to rent on a temporary contract (Huisman & Mulder, 2022). Precarious conditions are not limited to housing, the

job market and its temporary nature is a well known example. Precarity on the job market includes non-permanent contracts, low paying jobs with limited prospects and an overall lack of job security, income and irregular working hours (Livanos & Papadopoulos, 2019). These conditions can be translated onto the housing market: precarity here can be caused by temporary contracts, unaffordable rent (increases), bad housing conditions and limited prospects of moving up in the housing market (ie. towards a more secure form of tenancy such as owner-occupancy) (Listerborn, 2021).

Precarity is therefore often not limited to only one aspect of an individual's life. Often there is an interplay of precarisation in different aspects of life for example both job-wise and housing-wise. Often those with flexible contracts on the job market, are not able to buy a house or to rent on permanent contracts and are unable to move up in the housing market (Bobek et al., 2020). This worsens the overall situation of individuals leading to 'precarious living' (Listerborn, 2021). Those that were already living precariously before and other groups in society that are already vulnerable and generally have less money to spend (e.g. children, young adults, elderly), are increasingly at risk of living precariously: they tend to have fewer resources to be able to choose, and therefore are increasingly forced into precarious situations (Huisman & Mulder, 2022).

Though housing precarity is caused by numerous issues such as unaffordability, waiting times, bad housing conditions and an overall shortage of housing, temporary contracts are chosen as the focus of this study as they play an important role in creating insecurity for renters (Listerborn, 2021). Within the context of this study housing precarity is approached as the state of uncertainty wherein renters and seekers find themselves, caused by temporary contracts, as they are one of the main drivers of precarity on the rental market and the most clear-cut driver to study in the policy making process.

2.3 Politics and temporary contract legislation in the Netherlands

To give a brief introduction and overview of the context of this study, political and legal context will be discussed in this section.

The Dutch parliamentary system is bicameral and therefore consists of two 'chambers': the First Chamber (the Senate) and the Second Chamber (the House of Representatives). Members of the House of Representatives, unlike members of the Senate, are able to propose new legislation and amendments and have a more active role in discussing existing and new policy. Therefore the focus in this study lies upon the House of Representatives (parlement.com, n.d.; tweedekamer.nl, n.d.). In total the House of Representatives consists of 150 members, a multitude of parties across the political spectrum are represented in the House of Representatives. Parties are divided into coalition and opposition parties. In line with the national elections held every four years, the composition of these

two groups changes every four years. Further information on the political parties discussed in this study can be found in appendix 3.

As the focus of this study lies upon political debate from 2015 up until (the first half of) 2023, the legislative context concerning temporary rent will be discussed in the following section.

In July 2016 the **Wet doorstroming huurmarkt** (Eng.: law throughput in the rental market) came into force. This law consisted of both enabling housing corporations to raise rents for those with a higher income, and enabling the possibility to offer generic temporary rental contracts. The goal of this law was to encourage people with a higher income living in public housing, to move on in their 'housing career' and move to free market rental housing or owner-occupied housing. During this time, a law change also was approved playing into the belief that temporary contracts for target groups would push for more moving on in the housing market. This change was called 'tijdelijke huisvesting van jongeren' Eng.: **'temporary housing for youth'.** Here it is believed that these will help young people to find housing easier and evade the long waiting lists for public housing. When these young people become 'too old' for the housing, their contract ends, and they are forced to find a new place, making room for someone else who is a member of the target group.

During COVID-19, debate on rental contracts swelled again, during this time it was questioned whether or not temporary rental contracts should be able to be extended, to prevent evictions of tenants renting on temporary contracts but also to be able to offer contracts that are able to be tailored to the specific needs of landlords and renters. A law that enables the extension of temporary contracts for a few months was passed: the 'Tijdelijke wet verlenging tijdelijke huurovereenkomsten' Eng.: **'temporary law for the extension of temporary rental agreements'**.

In 2021, an amendment within another legislative proposal was approved by the House of Representatives. However, its implementation was blocked by the Senate. This amendment would have allowed for further expansion of temporary contracts, by offering the opportunity to offer them for a longer period (three years instead of two years).

In May of 2021, a first evaluation of law 'doorstroming huurmarkt' was published, which started to spark debate in politics on whether the law worked out in practice as intended, or if it had too many negative consequences. This led to the approval of a law putting limits on generic temporary contracts again in 2023, called the 'wet vaste huurcontracten' Eng.: **law 'permanent rental contracts'.** This law limits generic temporary contracts, though still leaving room for exceptions and temporary contracts for several target groups.

TIMELINE

Legislation on temporary rental contracts in the Netherlands

2015	**2016**	**2020**	**2021**	**2023**
Law 'temporary housing for youth', proposed by Schouten (CU)	Law 'doorstroming huurmarkt' proposed by Blok (VVD) and Van der Steur (VVD)	Temporary law 'extension of temporary rental agreements' proposed by Van Veldhoven-van der Meer (D66) and Dekker (VVD)	Amendment to further expand possibilities for temporary rental contracts, proposed by Koerhuis (VVD) *not put in practice*	Law 'permanent rental contracts' proposed by Nijboer (PvdA) and Grinwis (CU)

Figure 1: Timeline of law concerning temporary contracts

Now that the broader context of this study's topic has been presented, in the next sections the theoretical lens for this study will be further developed, discussing politics, policy, narratives and their subsequent dynamics and elements.

2.4 Politics and policy making as a messy process

In the context of this research, policy making is seen as a non-rational process. Instead of perceiving it as a process wherein the pros and cons are weighted against each other and the 'best' option is chosen to fit a certain goal, policy making is seen as part of politics and therefore inherently 'messy' (Stone, 2002). In complex situations it is rather impossible to have access to full information to be able to make rational decisions, therefore policy making often is about what the world *should* look like (ibid.). This is the reason why policy making is based upon narrative, and it is also the reason why politics is rather a struggle of ideas, as outcomes are impossible to be known with full certainty (ibid.). These different narratives present in politics lead to different constructed realities. Therefore, rather than extracting policy from politics to analyze it, politics and its deliberation is seen as central to policy-making. Previous research on narratives in housing policy also has shown that policy is rather a competition between ideologies, beliefs, political power and public opinion, rather than a rational process (Bierre & Howden-Chapman, 2017; Heslop & Ormerod, 2019). In line with this, is political discourse on temporary rent in the Netherlands, Huisman (2016), argues that an explicit ideological argument has been present in debate and policy making since 2013.

This central role of discourse and narrative in the policy making process will further be explored in the next two sections (2.4.1 and 2.4.2).

2.4.1 Policy discourse

In 1996, Jacobs & Manzi noted how other disciplines have and were making the narrative turn, but within housing policy studies, this was not yet the case and policy language remained perceived as a neutral vessel. Their critique was that this overlooks the "power relations, ideological contestation and political conflict" present in the housing debate and policy dynamics. They argued that housing policy change and the language accompanying it does not merely serve as a vessel to communicate and articulate, but says a lot more, for example about power relations, distribution of blame and responsibility and ideology.

Analyzing policy discourse helps to understand how policy 'happens'. Additionally, discourse analysis can be used to understand controversies, different positions and values regarding complex issues regarding policy and policy change (Korsten, n.d.). Studying language helps to understand how individuals understand their environment and how they interpret it. Moreover, as (policy) language is not neutral, the study of language can be used to understand political activity and how it feeds into policy making and can contribute to a clash of positions in debate (Korsten, n.d.; Jacobs, 2006).

Policy discourse has three layers, the first being epistemic motives, the second being policy vocabularies, and the third, storylines and narratives. These three layers can be analyzed and in that way discourse can be compared with each other (Korsten, n.d.). Noteworthy is that opposing parties can share the same discourse, this phenomenon can even be a strength of a particular way of seeing something (Hajer, n.d.). The redefining of a certain issue and/or solution can be done by subtle modification of the storyline. However, often the fundamental structure of the storyline is not altered (Cherry et al., 2015).

2.4.2 Policy narratives

"When sharing our stories, we do not list facts. Rather, we use plot, characters, and morals to communicate"
(Crow & Jones, 2018, p. 232)

Thinking in terms of 'policy narratives' is helpful because in many situations, different parties and individuals do not agree on the phenomenon, its causes, the (severity) of its consequences nor the solutions. Some issues are even debated at their core: are they an issue or not? (Korsten, n.d.).

Storytelling achieves a connection between that what has been going on and is experienced as a worrisome, uncertain and ambiguous situation, and that what would need to be done to solve this situation. Storytelling first sketches out the initial situation, defining its actors, factors and the

beginning of the situation. From an unnoticed and unproblematic situation, development to a worrisome and problematic situation is developed, then suggestions are made that point to a resolution and with that end of the story. Through this storytelling elements are tied together in logical, causal order and put into a plot line (Van Hulst and Yanow, 2014). Moreover, storytelling often moves beyond a mere problem definition, also often narrating a moment in time where 'all was well', and when current worries came into being. Doing this, stories narrate what went wrong, what or who is to blame for the cause of harm, and therefore already suggesting what needs fixing and therefore a solution (ibid.).

To summarize, narratives have the power to connect issue, cause, actors, and solutions, they serve as a vessel for knowledge and can be used to convince. They simplify complex issues, most often in a subjective way, looking at an issue from a particular perspective, narratives offer a stable ground upon which decisions can be made, this common understanding of the nature of a problem that narratives offer is essential for a successful policy outcome (Jones, 2018; Shanahan et al., 2011; Van Eeten, 2004; Post et al., 2010). Stories pull the black and white out of a complex and gray world. Events, solutions and characters are often portrayed as either 'good' or 'bad'. However, this strength that is part of narratives, also becomes their weakness. Painting a black and white world, which in reality is gray, can become highly problematic. Narratives can give the illusion of making decisions upon stable ground, when in reality this is not the case. Parts of reality that are left out of the narrative can still have a considerable impact on decisions and policies made that did not take these into account, and issues that require attention could be left neglected.

Within politics and policy making, narratives are therefore key in defining an issue in a way that helps to advance a politician's want and their political position (Bierre and Howden-Chapman, 2017). Therefore, taking a critical look at stories in politics is highly important in order to understand debate and policy dynamics, as they can reveal a lot about the narrator's worldview and intention. This central role that narratives have was already recognized in the 1980's (Czarniawska, 2010), which led to an increasing number of academics becoming interested in the narrative turn in the social sciences (Jacobs & Sobieraj, 2007). In 2010 the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) was introduced by Jones & McBeth, offering a framework to empirically study narratives in and around policy. The NPF assumes bounded rationality of decision makers, and the social construction of problems (Jones, 2018). Policy making is seen as a process of collaboration between different actors to give meaning to and understand the issue at hand and the struggle of which images of the world govern policy (Ivanov, 2021; Marston, 2000; Stone, 2002). Since this determines how politics is experienced by citizens and more importantly what problem definition is taken as departure for solutions (ibid.).

The NPF helps to identify narrative elements in policy that are utilized by policy actors (Pierce et al., 2014). These elements are the setting (i.e. context of policy narratives), characters and the moral of the story (ibid.). The NPF has two requirements for something to be a policy narrative: at least one character and a policy preference need to be present (ibid.). The NPF as a methodological lens will further be discussed in chapter 3.

As the NPF assumes that policy narratives follow the 'classic' narrative structure and elements (Stone, 2002), in the next sections (2.5 t/m 2.7), these will further be discussed, starting with the problem construction and ending with the solution.

2.5 What is a 'problem' and what is a problem?

Problem construction in policy and housing

"Every language of problem definition [...] makes use of stories." (Stone, 2002, p. 134)

2.5.1 What is a 'problem'?

A problem in public policy "is a situation that is recognized as subject to action" (Neto & Barcelos, 2020, p. 1635). Therefore the words 'problem' and 'solution' are inseparable from each other, they both require each other. A problem definition automatically has consequences for a possible solution, meaning that problem definitions in politics are strategically made to promote a certain course of action and possible solution(s) (Stone, 2002). Interestingly, within policy making, 'solution' does not always come after 'problem' (ibid.). The same solution can be used numerous times to solve different problems, making the 'solution' come first and after that the 'problem' which it should fix. This phenomenon also has been labeled as 'problem surfing' by Boscarino (2009), arguing that solutions precede problems and that problems might even be actively sought after to fit policy solutions (Boscarino, 2009 in McBeth & Lybecker, 2018). Moreover, proposals for policy change often rely on problematizations rather than easily identifiable 'crisis points' (Bacchi, 2012). As argued by Bacchi (2012), making the problem construction the focus of the policy analysis, rather than the way that it is solved, enables the researcher "to uncover the political, epistemological and historical contexts which are constitutive of the problem representation" (Riemann, 2023, p.155).

2.5.2 Rebranding the cause(s)

For a situation to be put on the political agenda, it first needs to be recognised as a 'problem' (Barcelos, 2020). Only then, policy makers will give the problem attention and start to generate solutions. Through argumentation, adding 'color' to information, the use of causal arguments, a problem is crafted into a narrative and actors can convince others that the situation is indeed a problem (Neto & Barcelos, 2020). When issues go from being perceived as having a natural or

accidental cause, to having a 'human-induced' cause, a hands-on solution (i.e., policy) can be argued for and blame and responsibility can be assigned accordingly (Stone, 2002). In reality, problems often have complex and multiple causes, but in politics a single cause and a 'villain' can be more useful to put forward a solution for the problem and muster support for that solution (i.e. policy). In the process of defining a policy problem, numbers are often used (Stone, 2002). In the early phases numbers are used to illustrate that a problem is not only there, but that it is big, and often even growing (ibid.)

Politicians and other decision makers often think that a problem is defined when its causes are identified and described. Therefore, within policy debate there often is the notion that the 'one' root cause should be found and with that a solution will emerge, which in reality is not the case when dealing with complex problems (Stone, 2002). Singling out these 'single causes' also have the function of being able to assign blame to someone or something. Another risk in policy practice is only treating the symptoms of a problem instead of the cause, which does not make the problem go away and could only make the initial cause grow stronger (Stone, 2002). This also signifies the often poor relationship between the social sciences and politics: whereas social scientists often recognize the complexity of problems and their multiple causes, politicians seek for simple causes that can fit into their ideological standpoints and arguments (ibid.). Political debate therefore is more about ideological standpoints, and how control and responsibility is distributed, than about empirical claims and data (ibid.).

2.5.3 Mustering support

The included goals, wishes and intentions within problem definition are also not neutral, but rather are a way to muster political support (Stone, 2002). Setting goals means sketching out a future that is worthy of supporting and taking action for. How alternative outcomes are framed is also important, often other possible (not preferred) outcomes and/or policy alternatives are framed as impossible or in a negative light (ibid.) . Since mustering as much political support as possible is important for a policy proposal to succeed, such as for passing laws, ambiguity, rather than explicitness can help to unite people from different sides, but also to keep the policy making process flexible and open for alterations (ibid.).

2.5.4 Problem construction in housing

The process of problem construction described in the previous section, also applies to housing. Problems within the housing market also often do not emerge out of nowhere but are rather problematized through a process of collective definition, and as result of lobbying (Barcelos, 2020; Jacobs et al., 2003). Housing problems have a tendency to come and go on the policy agenda, and debates on housing issues are often more so a battle of different frames, ideology and narratives (ibid.). A 'housing crisis' for example often does not have a clear beginning point, a main cause which can be singled out and fixed. Rather, debate surrounding the housing market is more so about

ideology and what the preferred relationship between state and market is, and who are thought to be the preferred recipients of the welfare state (Heslop & Ormerod, 2019; Marston, 2000; Jacobs, 2006; White & Nandedkar, 2019). This also goes for the Dutch case: housing shortages and 'crises' have come and gone in public and political debate throughout the last century, from the shortage post second world war which still had effects decades after the war, to a crisis caused by lack of affordability and shortage in the 2010s and 2020s (Canon Volkshuisvesting Nederland, n.d.). This illustrates the constant presence of a general mismatch between demand and supply. In the field of housing there is constant tension between owner and renter; those that profit from housing and those that do not.

Jacobs et al. (2003) argue that there are three necessary conditions that have to be met for a housing problem to be accepted and acted upon. The first is that a convincing narrative needs to be deployed to tell a plausible story of a social problem. Secondly, a coalition of support has to be constructed. Finally, the coalition needs to ensure that institutional measures are implemented.

2.6 The good, the bad and the ugly

Assigning blame and responsibility through character construction

To be able to distribute blame, responsibility and solutions with their subsequent benefits, a problem construction within policy making needs characters: actors that are framed into archetypal story characters. Central questions include "Who is affected? In what way? Do they know it? What do they do about it?" (Stone, 2002, p. 210). 'Effects' are not impactful in political debate, they first need to be translated into 'demands', then they can be translated into the more active 'interests' and ways to possibly influence the 'effects' (Stone, 2002). This process of 'effects' being translated into something more pragmatic is central to problem (and solution) construction.
Within policy making and policy narrative making, there is always the need to decide which causal factor(s) to address and highlight (Stone, 2002). These choices also impact the solution put forward and how blame and responsibility is assigned to actors: what should be controlled, what should be sanctioned and what should be rewarded? Narratives can protect the current social order, but also challenge or subvert it by pointing out (new) actors that hold responsibility for the cause of a problem, or even reassign the blame totally to another actor. If (new) victims are identified, it could be argued that they should be compensated. Moreover, 'fixers' of the problem also can be identified that then gain agency (Stone, 2002).

The central assumption of social construction of realities through narratives also extends to the characters that are part of the story. Roles and responsibilities need to be assigned, subsequently archetypal characters are assigned. Archetypal characters in storytelling are the hero, the villain and the victim. Moreover, there are several other 'classic' characters within storytelling such as allies, mentors and shapeshifters (those that are hero and victim in the same story). These roles can be

assigned to people, groups and even non-human entities (Stone, 2002). Responsibilities and blame are assigned accordingly: blame can be assigned to villains, those who should execute solutions are heroes and/or mentors, and those who should receive the benefits from the solutions are those in need: the victims (Shanahan et al., 2008). Consequently, the social constructions of characters in the story influence the policy agenda, the chosen policy tools to execute the policy, who they should and should not target and the rationale(s) used to legitimize the policy (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

Political ideology also seeps into the construction of characters. When assigning responsibility and blame, there often is a difference between conservative/right-wing and progressive/left-wing. According to many conservatives, individuals are often responsible for problems such as poverty and illness. On the other hand, progressives see larger societal structures and organizations responsible for these types of issues (Stone, 2002).

Furthermore, the way these characters are painted within policy narratives is influenced by which group they belong to (see figure 2, Schneider & Ingram, 1993). This figure helps to answer the crucial question: who gets which benefits and responsibilities? This, and the way these actors/groups are framed and narrated, depends on which group they are in (in figure 2). For example, when *contenders* receive policy benefits, policy makers often do not try to explicitly highlight this in their campaigns. The tools themselves for the four different groups also are different; those in the *dependents* group more likely to need to take up their own responsibility in order to get benefits and there also often are eligibility requirements for this group. On top of that, recipients in this group will often be labeled and/or stigmatized in the process (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

Social Constructions and Political Power: Types of Target Populations

| | **Constructions** | |
	Positive	Negative
Strong	*Advantaged* The elderly Business Veterans Scientists	*Contenders* The rich Big unions Minorities Cultural elites Moral majority
Weak	*Dependents* Children Mothers Disabled	*Deviants* Criminals Drug addicts Communists Flag burners Gangs

Figure 2: character construction and their socio-economic status (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p. 336)

The social construction of characters becomes central to the way policy is communicated to and received by the public. Who the good, the bad and the evil are therefore depends on how and as which character actors are framed, but also on their socio-economic status in society. Furthermore, depending on their socio-economic status, some actors might even be tactically excluded from the narrative altogether.

The process of character construction is aided and influenced by symbolic language, metaphors, and finally, stories told (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). This process of *emplotment* will further be explored in the following section.

2.7 Towards a solution

From the moral of the story towards policy action

To ensure a dramatic and compelling narrative that will motivate to undertake action, political storytelling mainly revolves around negative stories. Exposure to skeptical argument often has a positive effect on policy support; negative information often is prioritized, a phenomenon known as the 'negativity bias' (Ertas, 2015). However, possible scenarios painted that would occur after undertaking action, could of course be more positive taking the shape of a 'happily ever after' story that ends with a positive resolution.

Especially conservatives and those on the right of the political spectrum are known for arguing that there could be harmful side effects of a policy that initially is well-intended (Stone, 2002). These arguments are especially made against policies that interfere with the free market and its mechanisms, as it is often argued that these policies are doomed to fail (ibid.). These arguments are for example used in debate on the government regulating rents (which according to conservatives leads to driving out landlords and a subsequent decrease in the housing stock). These types of arguments, that inevitably argue against social change and often blame the victim in the process, are also known as the 'perversity thesis' (ibid.).

As argued before, the construction of a problem already says a lot about what solution will be argued for. The moral of the story is either the preferred and therefore proposed policy solution, or presented as the policy problem (Pierce et al., 2014). Noteworthy are two prevalent uses of language in narratives that can play a key role in solution drafting. First is the use of metaphors, as these are often used to describe a problem by linking it to another problem. The metaphors used also affect the solution put forward by the policy engineers: if A is like B, and Y is the solution for B, the solution for A should be Y (Stone, 2002). Also known as the 'normative leap', the metaphor used, implies something for the solution.

Second is the use of illustrative cases within political discourse. Often problems are defined by certain illustrative cases, also known as synecdoches: parts are used to represent the whole (Stone, 2002). This comes with the risk of solutions and policy being made for these illustrative cases, which can end up defining and framing the policy response, rather than for the 'whole' that is in reality targeted by the policy. This is especially risky considering that within politics, extreme and 'horror' cases are often selected from a bigger group to build support for policy interventions (Stone, 2002).

So how do these narratives within politics relate to policy dynamics and change? This central question in this study is further explored in the next section.

2.8 Moments of change

An introduction to policy dynamics

Within policy dynamics, four ideal types can be defined: (1) policy alteration, (2) policy innovation, (3) policy succession and (4) policy termination (Korsten, n.d.). Within policy science, numerous theorizations around these policy dynamics exist to explain policy change, in this section three of those theories will be discussed.

Within theory on policy dynamics, there is an overall consensus that policy often is incremental and within a certain policy culture, in these time-frames policy change can be characterized as 'muddling through'. Large changes in policy only happen rarely (Korsten, n.d.).

Within Kingdon's (1984) Multiple Streams Approach (MSA) it is argued that change happens when three streams collide: that of problems, (feasible) solutions and politics (political momentum/acceptance) (Kingdon 1984 as cited in Korsten, n.d.; Mcbeth & Lybecker, 2018; Neto & Barcelos, 2020). By and large, these three streams operate separately, but when they collide they help to set the agenda and muster political support for potential policy change. Adding to this theory, McBeth and Lybecker (2018) argue that, not only a focusing event by collusion of the three streams is needed to allow for policy change, but this focusing event also needs to have potential to construct a powerful story about the event.

The policy generation theory, developed by De Vries (1999), stresses that it is impossible to always keep everyone satisfied when making and executing policy. Therefore, within a period of profound policy change, values and norms that have been neglected in a previous policy period, will be exemplified in the proposal and implementation of new policy. Because policy will in time, call for resistance of those being neglected by it (De Vries, 1999; Korsten, n.d.). Within the context of this study, it is hypothesized that these values and norms neglected in one period can be understood as counter narrative(s) present. Therefore it is likely that parts of or even a whole counter narrative becomes a main narrative during a period of policy change (illustrated in figure 3).

Within their punctuated equilibrium model, Baumgartner & Jones (1993) argue that policy often is stable, as decisions are made within a certain policy culture. This enables decision making based on the stable ground of certain morals and values (Korsten, n.d.; Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Included in these policy cultures are narratives. Within the punctuated equilibrium model it is assumed that policy change does not occur gradually but more so in sudden 'bursts', comparable to the MSA theory. Reasons for policy change can for example be shifts in politics or new evidence. Furthermore, Baumgartner & Jones (2018) argue that small changes can lead to positive feedback processes if these small changes generate extra political support instead of opposition. If such a positive feedback process occurs, they can lead to large policy changes; the macro political agenda therewith starts to shift, allowing for more dramatic policy change (ibid.).

Narratives shape all parts of the policy process; they "inform, influence and evaluate policies" (Crow & Jones, 2018, p.232; Barcelos, 2020). Policy change therefore also goes hand in hand with narratives, having a recursive relationship with policy change (Crow & Jones, 2018; Lees, 2004).

2.9 Hypotheses

To summarize chapter 2, to set parameters for narratives and to hypothesize how they relate to policy change, a visualized conceptual model is developed (figure 3). Narratives are expected to be relatively stable following policy stability. Moments of change in narrative are expected to occur when conditions for policy change are right, leading to the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Counter narrative(s) are informed by those individuals and factors neglected in the then current policy culture. When policy changes substantially, it is expected that counter narrative(s) take over and become the new main narrative. Furthermore, the main narrative is expected to transform into the counter narrative and possibly die down, or to be adapted in the new main narrative(s). A main narrative is understood as the narrative(s) that directly inform and legitimize current policy.
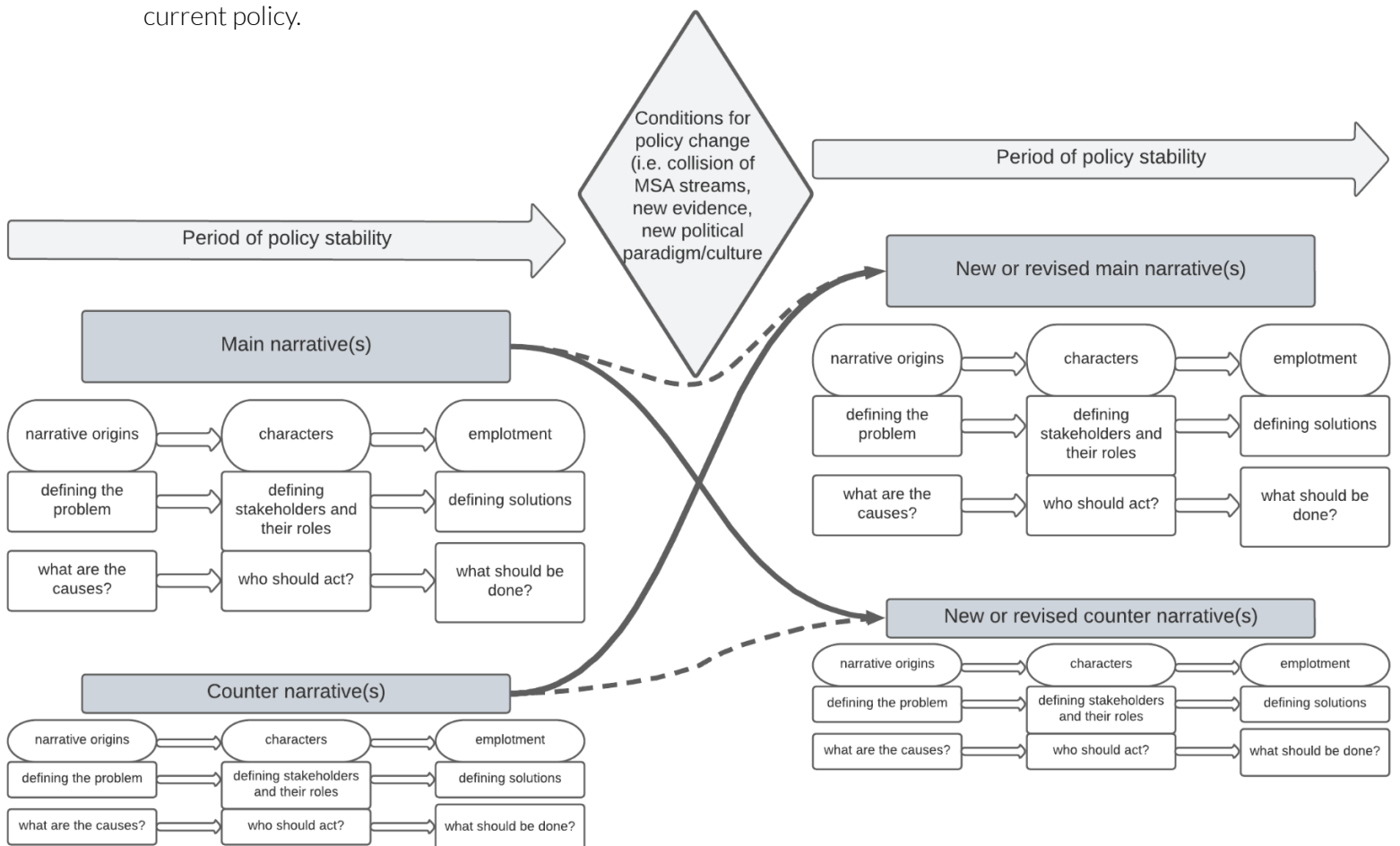

Figure 3: Visualization of conceptual framework

The second hypothesis follows Stone (2002), narratives in favor of temporary contracts are expected to argue for temporary rent as a solution to fix several issues within the topic of housing. Therefore it is also assumed that characters in narratives in favor of temporary contracts are quite flexible, depending on what problem the temporary contracts are posed as a solution to.

Hypothesis 2: Temporary rental contracts are argued to be a solution to several problems, wherein temporary contracts are the solution coming before the actual problem.

The third hypothesis concerns political ideology.

Hypothesis 3: Ideology plays an important role within the content of narratives and in the relationship between narratives and their narrators.

Following Bierre & Howden-Chapman, 2017; Huisman, 2016; Stone, 2002; White & Nandedkar, 2019; Marston, 2000; Jacobs, 2006; Heslop & Ormerod, 2019. Therefore those narratives which represent more right-wing ideas are expected to be negative, following the perversity thesis.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Narratives as a methodological lens for studying policy change

The process of policy making can be seen as that of 'building a story', within this approach, a change of policy therefore also means a change of story, and a change of story means a change of policy (Korsten, n.d.). This change starts with a new problem construction and is followed by its subsequent narrative. Language and its analysis are helpful to study this process and figure out how competing versions of a problem are chosen, socially constructed, how solutions are legitimized and how results are evaluated (Bierre & Howden-Chapman, 2017; Marston, 2000). A narrative analysis, analyzes how people make sense of a problem with many conflicts (Bierre and Howden-Chapman, 2017). Within NPF research, narratives can be researched in various ways, but the central goal of the NPF remains to analyze the relation between narrative and policy and the impacts of narrative on policy (Barcelos, 2020). This approach assumes that when a story has gotten old and not of this time anymore, a new story about a certain issue will be constructed. To argue for a new policy and therewith alter the course of action of the government. Of course, this process will not be smooth, those that still adhere to the old (dominant) discourse, and those who are proponents of the new, possibly dominant, discourse(s), will have to face each other (Korsten, n.d.).

Studying narrative policy windows provides for methodological challenges (McBeth & Lybecker, 2018; Lees, 2004). The first challenge is that it can be hard to determine how long a narrative remains powerful and relevant (Mcbeth & Lybecker, 2018). The reason for this is that narratives can quickly change and shift due to sudden events, think for example the Covid-19 pandemic. Narratives can become outdated due to new findings, leading to critique on certain narrative elements or even fully disprove a previous narrative. However, for the whole narrative to be replaced, a new counter narrative needs to be produced, one that people find more convincing (Van Eeten, 2004). Within the context of this study, narratives are seen as 'main narrative' when they directly underpin policy, following figure 3.

The second challenge concerns the recursive relationship between power and language (Lees, 2004). Meaning that policy language and narratives shape power, but at the same time are also shaped by power: narratives are both cause and effect of power. They can both inspire and serve as a basis for policy and they also highly influence how people perceive and attend to policy issues (Peterson & Jones, 2016). But at the same time narratives also serve as a way to legitimize policy and policy change (Lees, 2004; Jacobs, 2006). Therefore emphasis in this study is not just put on narratives and

their presence over the years, but also on how the content of narratives evolves over time. To get a better grasp on this interplay.

3.2 Research considerations and ethics

Within the NPF, policy narratives are seen as the independent variable, and narrators (politicians) are seen as flexible, being able to narrate different narratives, and therefore are a dependent variable (Jones & McBeth, 2010). This varying support of politicians for different narratives, is one of the key focus points in the NPF and this study (see *SQ4: How do the identified narratives relate to their narrative representatives?*).

There are different levels to do research on and collect data within the NPF. Research on the micro level seeks to understand how narratives influence individuals' opinions. On the meso level, the NPF is applied to understand how policy narratives and their narrators influence the policy outcome and change (Pierce et al., 2014). On the macro level the NPF for example concerns how policy narratives influence and shape cultural and institutional norms that finally influence policy outcomes (Pierce et al., 2014; Shanahan et al., 2011). Within this study there is a focus on the meso level, however it also touches upon the macro level.

A more practical consideration concerns that of 'flex housing'. Within the debate of temporary housing, in the more recent years a new phenomenon has been on the rise: that of flex and temporary housing. These are houses that are only on a location for a given amount of time. These situations also can cause precarity due to short contracts and bad housing quality, however as there is quite a large variety in this type of housing, this is not necessarily the case for all flex houses. They can for example be rented out on contracts up to twenty years, or renters can be guaranteed a new living space when they have to move out (Omgevingsweb, 2022). Therefore debate on this form of housing is excluded in this study.

The goal of this study is not to uncover 'truth', but rather to find out how 'truth' and realities are socially constructed in narratives and their usage. Therefore results from this study such as quotes and the uncovered narratives illustrate these constructed realities. It is recognized that this study and I as researcher do not exist in a vacuum, my own positionality including political stance towards the topic of housing could lead to bias in the research design, execution and analysis. However, the goal of this research is not to label narratives or politicians as 'good' or 'bad' but merely to illustrate how realities are constructed and how these relate to policy change. Furthermore, this constant awareness of different constructed realities existing parallel to each other, also increases awareness of 'my own' reality and assumptions as researcher (Bacchi, 2012). Concretely, in the data collection process, it is made sure that all debate on temporary rent is included, and no nuances are left out (explained further in section 3.3). Finally, during its development stage, the codebook was tested by

myself and someone else, and adjusted accordingly, to increase replicability and credibility of this study.

3.3 Selection of data

Since the focus of this study lies upon political narratives on the level of national politics, debates held in the House of Representatives are chosen as focus point. Furthermore, other documents such as explanatory memoranda and letters are used to further place these debates into context but they are not coded. As this study covers nine years, other qualitative methods such as interviews are not attractive as they would only serve as a snapshot and not grasp the full development of narrative and policy.

More concretely, all debates and further written material to contextualize them, are retrieved from https://www.tweedekamer.nl/, the website that archives all material discussed in the House of representatives. Debates held within the 'general committee for housing and national service' up until 2017 are checked for their relevance using the search method, searching for the terms: 'temporary', 'flex' and 'doorstroom', to search for relevant committee meetings. After 2017 this committee did not exist anymore and housing topics often are discussed within the general 'internal affairs' committee. These committee meetings held after 2017, were searched in the same way as described before. Furthermore all relevant law changes and proposals were identified before and their plenary debates and other relevant documents were collected accordingly. Finally, to make sure that nothing relevant was left out, the website https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken was searched with the following search terms: 'integrale visie op de woningmarkt' (Eng. integral vision on the housing market) for all general debates regarding the housing market. 'Scheefwonen' (Eng. Skewed living), 'flexibele huur' (Eng. flexible rental housing) and 'tijdelijke huur(contracten)' (Eng. Temporary rent(al contracts)). All debates and other documents were searched with the terms 'rent', 'temporary', 'housing', 'scheefwonen', 'target group' and 'doorstroom', to assess their relevance before adding them to the dataset. In total 64 debates are collected, they are listed in appendix 1 for further detail.

3.4 Coding process

All selected documents are subdivided in categories: (1) debates on law proposals, (2) debates on general law change, (3) general debates regarding the housing market, (4) written documents such as letters by politicians and explanatory memoranda. The first three are all coded, and the fourth category is used for context. Coding is done with the help of the software Atlas.ti.

Codes are based upon the research questions and literature, including the NPF, they are further refined during a round of pre-coding of a handful of documents. Codes are all compiled in the codebook which can be found in the appendix 2. To be able to answer the research questions two codes are chosen as 'static codes' (independent variables) namely the narrative representatives (political parties) and the year of debate, changes in the other 'NPF' codes then can be related to these 'static codes'. This could be seen as contradicting as narratives are taken as the independent variable during analysis and not the narrators. However, due to the practical reason of not knowing the full narratives before the coding process, it is chosen to initially not have a 'static' narrative code.

First all documents in the two categories of (1) debates on law proposals and (2) debates on general law change are read and coded using the codebook, things that stand out are noted and a first narrative subdivision is made in a separate document. Then all quotes under both problem construction codes are reviewed and further subdivided into narratives, also with the help of notes made during the reading of these debates. All quotes under the problem construction codes are then coded again with these narratives. Finally, the third category of general debates regarding the housing market, are coded using a more quantitative approach. All these documents are precoded with the terms often used in discourse (see codebook -> emplotment -> key terms), then only passages around these key terms are read and coded. Finally, narratives are refined after all debates have been coded.

3.5 Analysis process

After the coding is completed, codes and their adjacent quotes are analyzed to answer the research questions central to this study. As time is a crucial factor in this study, attention is paid to it while answering every sub question, to see whether the answer to the question has changed over time, using the co-occurence tool with the 'year' codes in Atlas.ti.

SQ1: What is the issue that temporary rental contracts should solve according to the identified narratives?
To answer SQ1, all quotes coded with 'problem construction [in favor]' are read and grouped together. Moreover the same is done with all quotes under 'problem construction [against]', to be able to compile the 'against' narratives.

SQ2: Who are the actors and factors and what role are they assigned in the narratives?
To answer this question, the 'character code' is developed such as 'hero' and 'villain', then all these quotes coded with the 'character code' are analyzed how they are used together with the 'problem construction' codes, using the co-occurence tool in Atlas.ti. As different roles are attached to these archetypal characters, this question answers how responsibility and blame is distributed within the narratives.

SQ3: What are the main and counter narratives identified?

With the help of SQ1 and SQ2 and notes made throughout the coding process, this question is answered. As discussed in the previous section, after all narratives are identified, all problem construction codes are coded with these narrative codes to be able to further analyze the development and usage of these narratives. Furthermore, a visual is developed to illustrate the relationship between these narratives, to help to distinguish between 'main' and 'counter'.

SQ4: How do the identified narratives relate to their narrative representatives?

The identified narratives from SQ3 and the political party codes are analyzed with the co-occurence tool in Atlas.ti. Two visuals are developed within this question: one that shows the overall relation between political parties (the narrative representatives) and narratives, and a visual that shows how this relationship has developed over the years studies (2015-2023).

SQ5: How does argumentation within the narrative relate to evidence and evaluation?

In order to answer this fifth question, two codes are used: the 'NOA' (nature of argument) and 'policy evaluation'. Using the Atlas.ti co-occurrence tool, these are analyzed in combination with the narratives, to see what evidence is used in argumentation (if any).

SQ6: How do policy and narrative dynamics on temporary rental contracts relate to policy change theory?

This last subquestion will be answered by comparing policy change theory which is discussed in the 2.8 'moments of change' section, with the answers of previous subquestions and the broader political debate on housing in the Netherlands. Finally the NPW (narrative policy window) code is analyzed to see how a potential policy window is narrated.

Chapter 4: Results

In total five narratives are uncovered, some very much in favor or against, and some are more moderate. Narrative 1 is the most 'in favor' narrative, narrative 2, 3 and 4 all advocate for a more 'toned-down' version of temporary rent and finally, narrative 5 is very much against and questions temporary rent all together. The five uncovered narratives will be further discussed and explored in this section, answering the following sub-questions in the process:

 SQ1: What is the issue that temporary rental contracts should solve according to the identified narratives?
SQ2: Who are the actors and factors and what role are they assigned in the narratives?
SQ3: What are the main and counter narratives identified?

4.1 Uncovered narratives

Narrative 1

Key argument
Temporary rental contracts will help the housing market and landlords and they will increase supply on the private rental market.

"Temporary contracts increase the supply in the private sector and encourage the moving on of people in the public housing sector. Therefore a new step is made towards a housing market that actually functions as a market". (Van der Linde (VVD), p. 7 in 02/02/2016 plenary debate law doorstroming huurmarkt)

Moral of the story
The central issue that this narrative addresses and proposes a solution for is the lack of housing supply in the Netherlands. Its central assumption is that temporary rental contracts will create extra supply on the rental market. The logic behind this assumption is that landlords might find it scary to rent out their place indefinitely, or due to practical reasons (e.g. planned renovations) can only rent it

out for a shorter period. Therefore, allowing them to rent out these places that otherwise would just be vacant, on generic temporary contracts, would put these houses back on the market. Further following this rhetoric, this narrative wants to 'fix' the broader housing market; the narrators of this narrative assume that rigidity in law and governmental control have ruined the market and that therefore there is a lack of housing in the Netherlands. Therefore allowing more options for temporary rent and increasing property rights would help to fix the 'overly controlled' market.

Characters
Though depending on who is narrating this narrative, the main focus lies upon the characters 'the housing market' and 'the landlords'. They both have a victim/hero role: both need to be saved and helped to be able to function properly again. Moreover, though less often, seekers on the housing market are also included in the narrative as they will also benefit from the larger demand, however this is mostly done when center and left-leaning politicians narrate this narrative. Then, seekers are 'rescued' by politicians who are narrating this narrative and are using the instrument of temporary rental contracts. Generally, the controlling government is seen as a villain, they are seen as the main responsibility for the housing shortage.

Narrative 2

Key argument
Both on the demand and supply side of the housing market, people want to have more opportunities for flexibility in their rental contracts. Therefore we should help out these people and by lifting legal restrictions and further allowing temporary rental contracts.

"The first [reason] is the significant societal demand for more flexible rental contracts. That was for me the reason to organize this neatly in the form of temporary rental contracts." (Minister Blok p. 27 in 09/10/2016 general debate on rental policy)

Moral of the story
This narrative argues that people are currently overly restricted and need more flexibility in their rental contracts, also to match rental policy with the further flexibilizing society: people, jobs and overall society have become more flexible and therefore the housing market should move with that. However, there are currently still laws restricting this and therefore we should allow for more temporary contracts. The central assumption is that both renters and landlords want to rent temporarily. Further allowing temporary rent is even beneficial for renters as it offers them more rental protection and a better legal ground to have a contract on. The term 'maatwerk' (eng: customization), is central in this narrative. It is argued that there needs to be room for customization or otherwise properties will be vacant. Furthermore this argument of customization is also used to

make the paradoxical argument that introducing temporary contracts will strengthen the positions of renters that have been renting without any legal protection before.

Characters

The main villain in this story is the government and their rigid laws that are restricting temporary rent. The first victim in this narrative is the renter/seeker, who's further flexibilized lifestyle is not supported. The second victim, the landlord, also has hero potential, often the landlord is framed as benevolent and as someone that would like to rent out one or maybe two properties. But they are limited in this opportunity by legal restrictions, therefore the opportunity to make easier use of temporary contracts will allow these landlords to supply their houses and help out seekers. This illustrative case will be further explored in chapter 5.

Narrative 3

Key argument

Temporary rent is the key for pushing people to move on from the public housing sector towards the private sector, these contracts make sure that public housing stays available for the target group that it is intended for.

"Temporary rental contracts for young people are good for the availability of housing, they help against 'skewed living' and they especially have a quick effect." (Van der Linde (VVD) p. 2 in 10/12/2015 plenary debate on temporary housing for youth)

Moral of the story

The problem to be solved in this narrative is the lack of moving on from the public housing sector. This issue is seen as the main cause for the lack of accessibility to public housing due to the long waiting lists. The mechanism central in the narrative is the following: if someone aged 22 gets a temporary contract of 5 years for youth housing, they will have to move out at 27 and in the meantime they have built up enough time on the waiting list for social housing or enough savings to move on towards the private sector. This way, making room for another starter on the rental market.

Characters

Key to this narrative is the renter/seeker as shapeshifter: first seekers are framed as victims of this lack of moving on from public housing, as they have to be on long waiting lists before they can rent public housing. But when they become a renter, especially when they rent for a longer period of time and have a higher income, they are framed as the villain. They are called 'scheefwoner' (eng: skewed renter), which further moves the problem construction towards the renter.

Narrative 4

Key argument

Temporary rental contracts have many unwanted side-effects, including decreased liveability, stress for renters and rapidly increasing rental housing prices. Therefore we should limit the legal possibilities that enable landlords to offer them.

"That possibility [law doorstroming huurmarkt] was created in 2016, with the expectation that more housing would be supplied and with the thought that the contract for indefinite period would stay as the norm. However, from the evaluation it appears that there is not necessarily more housing supplied and that the contract for indefinite period is no longer the norm. Therefore we need to end this practice." (Bushoff (PvdA) paragraph 111 in 11/05/2023 follow-up debate on law permanent rental contracts)

Moral of the story

Narrative 4 is a very broad narrative, at its root its main use is to argue against temporary rent, using pragmatic reasoning of what negative impacts temporary contracts could have or what negative consequences already are playing out in practice. Depending on the narrator, the narrative is against temporary rental contracts all together, or against them becoming 'the norm', but still leaving some options for temporary rental contracts. Especially after the evaluation of the law 'doorstroming huurmarkt' (see Companen, 2021), this narrative has a very strong problem construction rooted in an official evaluation of the effects that temporary rental contracts have and did not have.

Characters

The main characters of this narrative are the renters/seekers, they are framed as victims as they are suffering from the issues directly caused by temporary contracts. There are two levels to the villains in this narrative: firstly the temporary contracts, and depending on the narrator of the narrative, also the politicians that allowed for the further possibilities for temporary rental contracts to be offered. And secondly the landlords, and especially the big (foreign) investors, who make use of the opportunities for their own benefit by for example increasing rents between tenants.

Key argument

On what are these arguments in favor of temporary rent really based? Why exactly do we want more legal room for temporary rental contracts?

According to the SP-fraction we should just build more public housing. The SP-fraction has often aimed for and argued for this. In which way is this law proposal going to stimulate the building of more housing? Or is the scarcity only going to be distributed in another way rather than being solved? (Bashir (SP) p. 3 in 10/12/2015 plenary debate temporary housing for youth)

Moral of the story

The problem construction in this narrative concerns exactly that: the problem construction that other narratives and their narrators make use of. Why are we allowing for more temporary contracts? What issues do we solve with it and cause with it? Why are we allowing for more temporary rent when we already have evidence against it? These are just some of the questions asked within this narrative. This narrative is very skeptical and revolves around the asking of questions on law and proposed amendments, and arguments of others.

Characters

This narrative mostly revolves around question asking, therefore all that is questioned is generally villainized: the established order, politicians in favor of temporary rent, and temporary rental contracts. Again, renters and seekers are victims in this narrative as the skepticism mainly revolves around the question of why the situation of renters is actively further precarized.

4.2 Presence of narratives

The presence of these narratives from 2015 to 2023 is visualized in figure 4 (see next page). This figure combines the timeline developed in figure 1, with the amount of quotes coded with a problem construction code + a narrative code. This figure answers the first part of SQ6: How do policy and narrative dynamics on temporary rental contracts relate to policy change theory?

There are several things that stand out in this figure. The first thing that stands out is the overall discourse intensity around the topic of temporary rental contracts, in the years 2018 and 2019, the

topic was barely mentioned. Whereas in years of law changes on temporary rental contracts, overall discourse was much more intense. A second thing to note is the rise of narrative 4 from 2019 onwards, from then every year half or more of the problem constructions fall under this narrative. A third thing to note is how some narratives have a very consistent presence: narrative 2 is for example present in every year. However some narratives are only narrated during the peak of debate such as narrative 1 or narrative 5. The final and fourth noteworthy part is how during the period of law change in 2023 with the law 'permanent rental contracts', still almost half of problem constructions are (partly) in favor of temporary rental contracts.

Discourse intensity and presence of narratives
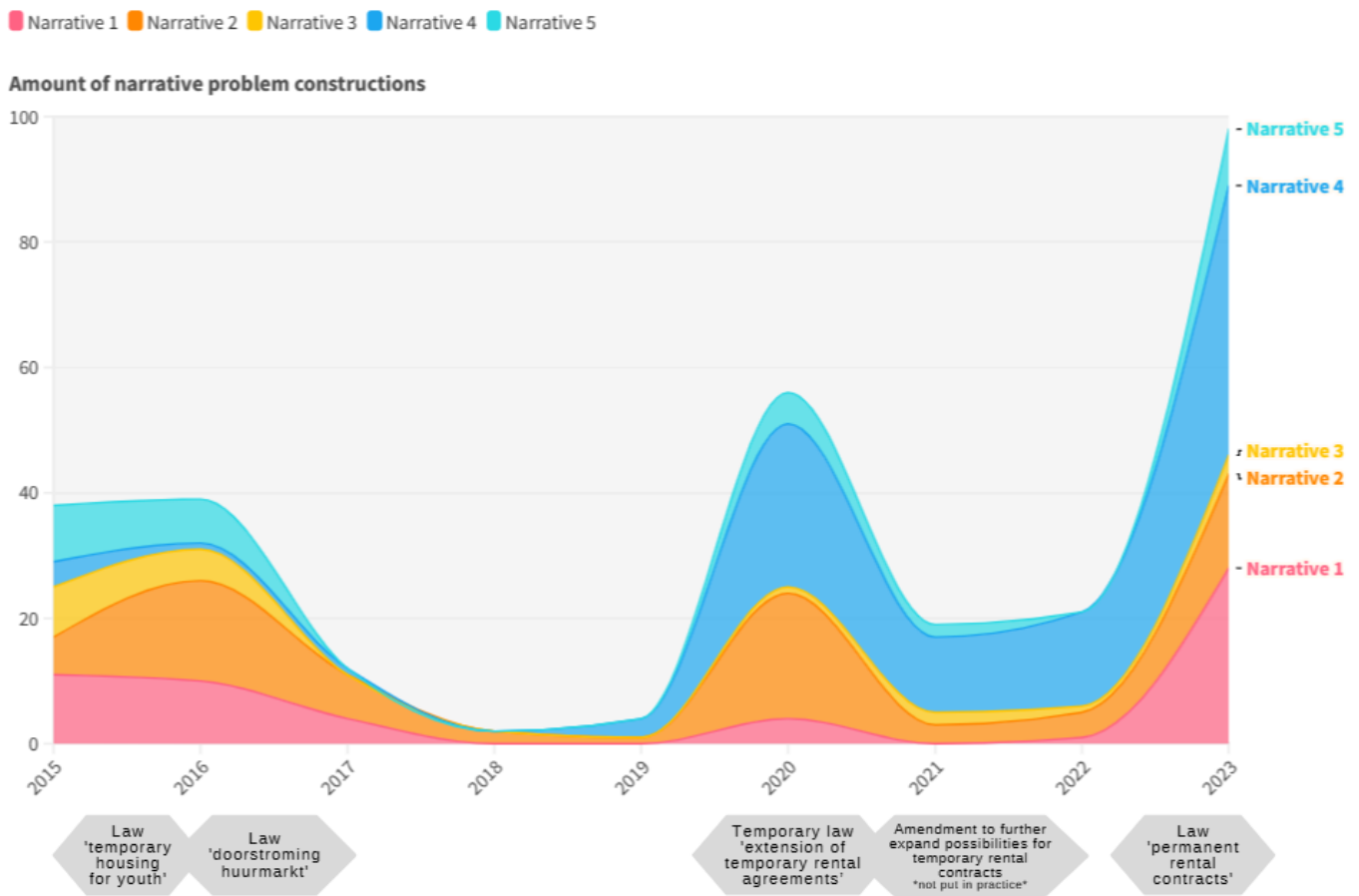

Figure 4: Discourse intensity and narrative presence in relation to law change

The results from this study will further be discussed in relation to theory in the next chapter, to get a better understanding of their meaning.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This discussion section is structured as follows: first, the relationships between narratives and their narrators is discussed, answering SQ4 (How do the identified narratives relate to their narrative representatives?) (section 5.1). After that narratives are discussed more in depth, including change within narratives, answering SQ 5 (How does argumentation within the narrative relate to evidence and evaluation?) (section 5.2). Following that is a more general discussion and reflection upon the three hypotheses and the narratives, especially in relation to policy change, answering SQ6 (How do policy and narrative dynamics on temporary rental contracts relate to policy change theory?) (section 5.3 and 5.4). Then, combining all results and answers to subquestions, the two main research questions are answered in section 5.5.

5.1 Narratives and their narrators

This section answers SQ4: how do the identified narratives relate to their narrative representatives? And reflects upon hypothesis 3: narrative and ideology are heavily connected. In appendix 3 an overview of all parties and their position on the political spectrum can be found.

The first figure developed to answer SQ4 is figure 5, which can be found on the next page. This figure illustrates the connection between narrators and narratives and further shows the overall presence of narratives, and in addition to that the presence of political parties in debates. Parties can be divided into three categories: those (mostly) against temporary rental contracts (narrative 4 and 5), those (mostly) in favor of temporary rental contracts (narrative 1, 2 and 3), and parties that narrate most narratives and therefore are quite flexible.
Parties that are mostly against include: GroenLinks, PvdA and SP
Parties that are mostly in favor include: Van Haga, Van Vliet and VVD (incl. minister Blok)
Parties that are flexible include: CDA (incl. minister De Jonge), CU, D66 (incl. minister Ollongren), PVV and SGP

When the position of these parties are compared to their overall ideological stance, this corresponds almost perfectly. Parties on the left side of the political spectrum are in favor of more governmental regulation on temporary contracts or even completely against these contracts. Parties situated on the middle of the political spectrum bring nuance within the debate on temporary rental contracts: often arguing that in some cases these contracts are beneficial, but not in all cases. Parties on the

right side of the political spectrum want less control of the government on temporary rent, so that the housing market can function 'better' and landlords have more flexibility.
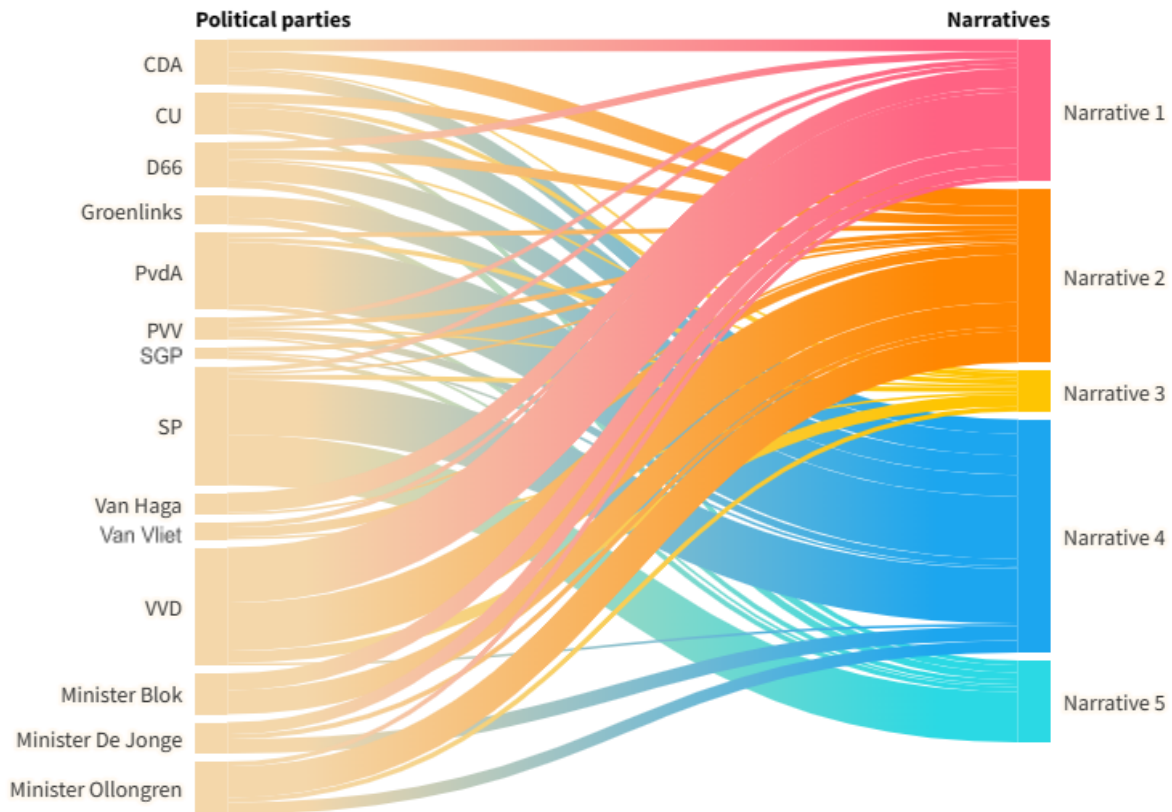
Figure 5: Relationship between narrators and narratives

When the factor of time gets added to the equation of this relationship between narratives and narrators, the flexibility of center parties and staticness of parties that are on the left or right wing is further illustrated. The relationship of narratives, narrators and time is visualized in figure 6, which can be found on the next page.

Relationship between narrators, narratives and time

Figure 6: Relationship between narrators, narratives and time

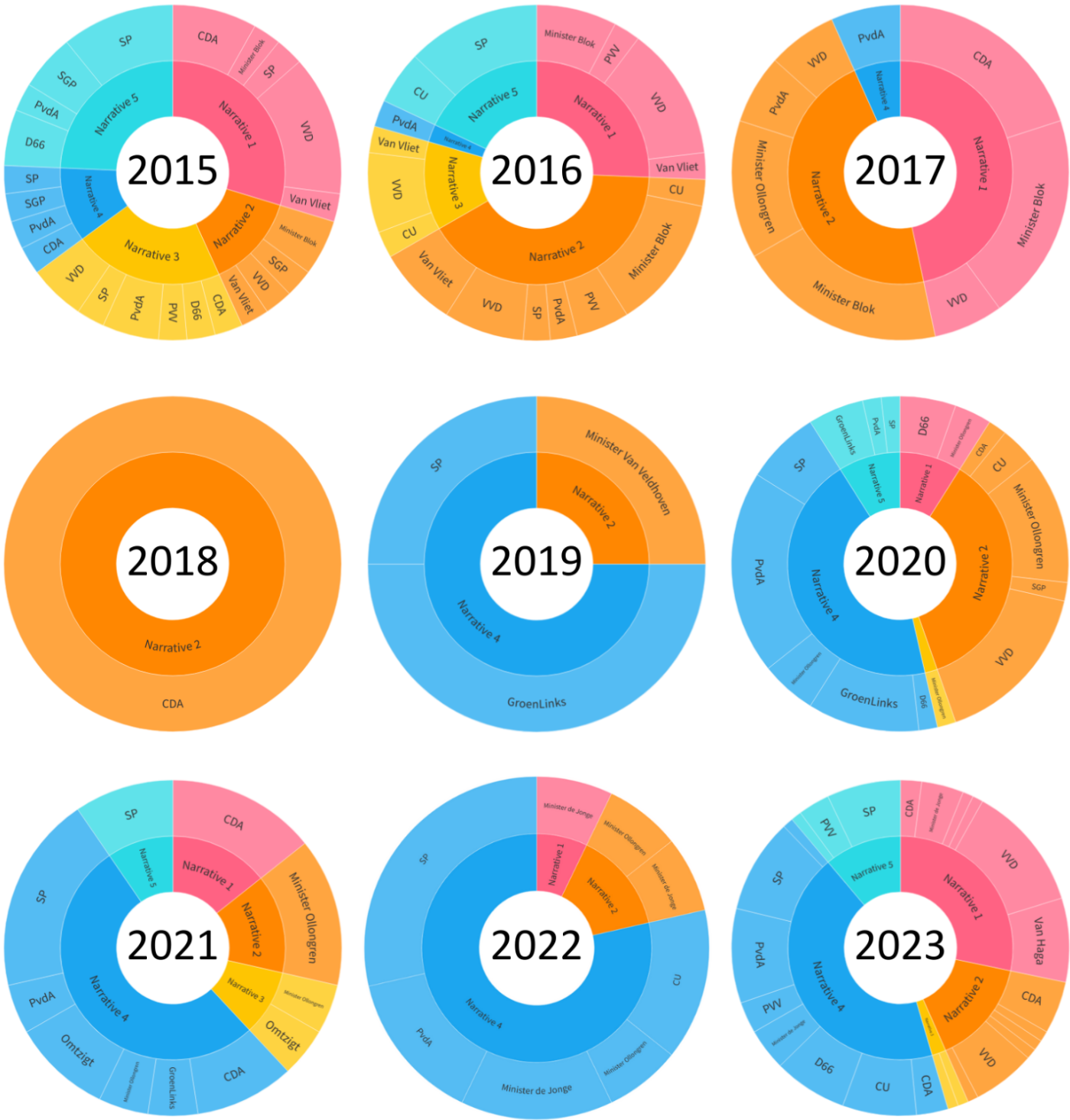The first thing that can be noticed in figure 6, is that from 2018 onwards no left-wing parties narrate the in favor narrative 1, 2 or 3 anymore. Furthermore, right-wing parties mostly only narrate narratives 1, 2 and 3 throughout all nine years. Interesting are the parties situated in and around the middle of the political spectrum, they narrate most narratives throughout the years studied. Some stay away mostly from the very ideological narrative 1 such as PvdA, CU and D66, in the latter two parties a slight shift towards the 'against narratives' can be detected, whereas a more noticable shift can be seen for the PvdA. Though, it also has to be noted that member of the PvdA and CU were initiators for the law 'permanent contracts'. For the CDA no shift is happening, also noteworthy is their usage of narrative 1 throughout the years, which the other center parties rarely utilize, this also is illustrative of their position on the right of the center. However what did change for all these center parties is their voting behavior (see appendix 4). Furthermore, ministers responsible for housing have shifted away from only narrating in favor of temporary contracts, from 2020 onwards they are narrating both sides, allowing for nuance in the debate. Though, it has to be noted that from 2020 onwards these ministers also are members of center parties.

From figure 5 and 6 the moderation of a lot of parties becomes clear. Often multiple narratives are narrated by narrators per year. Only parties that are further away from the center and have a very strong ideological link with the topic (e.g. VVD and SP) fully narrate in favor or against, and with that, these parties are also the only parties that fully correspond with their voting behavior.

From this section hypothesis 3 can be confirmed: ideology does play an important role within the content of narratives and in the relationship between narratives and their narrators. The preferred relationship between the welfare state and the housing market is very much present in the narratives, and the construction of characters also might shift in between narrators, left wing politicians are more likely to emphasize benefits for renters/seekers, whereas right wing politicians emphasize benefits for landlords and the market more. Furthermore, the relationship that narrators have with the narratives is also largely determined by their political stance. This is especially apparent for political parties which have a strong political stance towards the topic of housing and public policy.

5.2 Narratives, their content, and their relation to evidence throughout the years

This section answers SQ5: How does argumentation within the narrative relate to evidence and evaluation? To explore this question, per narrative the use of evidence and argumentation will be explored and discussed. Also the development of the narratives throughout the years (2015-2023), including the relation to legal change, will be discussed in this section.

Evidence and argumentation

The scientific evidence that this narrative's central assumption of 'temporary contracts will lead to an increase in housing supply' is based on, remains scarce. Within debate it is often posed as the 'logical' consequence: less restraints for landlords leads to more properties on the market. Moreover in the explanatory memorandum of the law 'doorstroming huurmarkt' no empirical evidence is cited that backs up the claims made in it.

Furthermore, this narrative makes use of illustrations; often the illustrative case of '*the benevolent landlord who would like to rent out their one property, that otherwise would be vacant, and needs more opportunities for this*' is given. These landlords can be a small entrepreneur who have a second property, for example for pension, part of an inheritance, or parents that have a second house wherein their children might want to live later. Though this illustrative case is often used, empirical evidence shows that landlords, also those with only one or a few properties, are "highly overrepresented in the upper economic strata" in the Netherlands (Hochstenbach, 2022, p. 327). Therefore this framing of '*people like you and I that just want to rent out their second property need to be helped*' is not as representative as made to believe by narrators of narrative 1 (the same goes for narrative 2, which also utilizes this argument).

Other illustrative cases used within narrative 1, are real-world examples given by narrators of cases of landlords that are currently renting out their property on temporary contracts, but would not if these contract opportunities were not available. These cases further establish the argument that these properties otherwise would be vacant.

Change of the narrative content throughout the years

In the first years studied, narrative 1 is used in the broader context of further liberalization and moving towards a 'housing market': more flexibilization will make the market function better and therefore allow for more housing. Therefore it is often used together with the concept of 'doorstroom' (Eng.: throughput), though this concept is not necessarily part of this narrative.

However as the Dutch housing market becomes increasingly tight and more people are increasingly struggling to find housing, not only those looking for public housing. This narrative utilizes the 'housing crisis' and therewith focuses more on the extra supply of housing that temporary contracts would create. In line with Stone (2002), this narrative uses the 'perversity thesis' in debate in 2022 and 2023: it is argued that further governmental control and putting limits on temporary contracts will drive out landlords and decrease the housing stock.

In these last years studied, this narrative shifts towards a more critical appearing framing. As decision making shifts away from what this narrative is advocating for, central questions become "do we have evidence that restricting temporary rent will not decrease housing supply?" "What is the evidence that we are basing decisions on?". The narrative paints a doom scenario of decreasing housing supply if more restrictions are put in place on temporary contracts. However, this narrative still fails to deliver evidence to support its central premise then, also for practical reasons of the feasibility to research its premise.

Narrative 2

Important to note is that narrative 1 and narrative 2 are highly connected and often used together: the basis of the argument in narrative 2 (more temporary opportunities), would lead to the promise central in narrative 1 (more housing). The main difference between narrative 2 and narrative 1 is that narrative 2 is more pragmatic; rather than focussing on the 'housing market', it focusses on people and their needs.

Evidence and argumentation
Clear numbers on how big the group of seekers that want temporary contracts is, is never given. The only 'evidence' are talks that were held with several key actors in the housing market such as organizations representing landlords, renters and public housing corporations (Blok, 2014). From these talks it was concluded that on the supply side, all actors were interested in more room for temporary contracts, only those on the demand side of the housing market (represented by merely one organization), were more critical of the proposals (Blok & Van der Steur, 2015).

However, some illustrative cases are used such as official visits to people renting temporarily who are happy with it, or examples of (imaginative) people that would want to rent temporarily but with current laws cannot.

"I did a work visit, from which I drew a few conclusions, The first being that there is a considerable societal demand for more flexible rental contracts." (Minister Blok, 9/10/2016 in general discussion rental policy)

Often general groups are called out that would benefit from more temporary contracts, such as newly divorcees, students, expats, and so on, and from the supply side, people that inherited a house or couples that want to move in together but are still unsure whether it will work out, the illustration of the 'benevolent landlord' discussed under narrative 1 also if often used.

One of the central arguments of this narrative is quite contradictory with academic research. According to narrators the housing market should move with the trend of the further flexibilizing job

market. Arguing that those with flexible job contracts should be able to be offered temporary rental contracts as well to match their situation (Wigger, 2021). However, instead of preferring the possibility of temporary rent, these groups are often forced into temporary housing instead, as they are often unable to move to a more permanent housing situation (Bobek et al., 2021; Listerborn, 2021).

Another rather ironic argument in this narrative is that 'renters currently renting on insecure contracts will be offered more protection with the introduction (or extension) of temporary contracts'. The next quote illustrates this:

"[...] But the core of the problem is that people are currently without rights [those with property guardianship contracts], but we could overcome that with the introduction of temporary rental contracts." (De Vries (PvdA), in 02/02/2016 plenary debate law doorstroming huurmarkt)

This argument is also often made during the Covid-19 pandemic, when there was a large consensus that temporary contracts should be able to be extended temporarily, illustrated by the quote:

"I really think that renters will have more security if they are able to get a temporary contract for a longer period of time." (Koerhuis (VVD), in 03/12/2020 debate possibilities for rent increase)

Change of the narrative content throughout the years
Narrative 2 also shifts during the years studied, in the earlier years arguments are often made from both the demand and supply side, however later on often arguments are made only from the supply side, with only a few politicians noting that temporary contracts are beneficial to a few target groups in society to bring more nuance to the debate of banning temporary contracts. The argument that 'a significant group on the demand side want temporary contracts' disappears, rather it is argued that temporary options are beneficial for a few select groups. The argument on the supply side turns in a similar direction of narrative 1: legal restrictions on temporary rent will limit those that want to rent out their properties but are not allowed to do so.

Narrative 3

Evidence and argumentation
Narrative 3 makes use of rather inconsistent evidence. In the explanatory memorandum of the proposal by Schouten for temporary youth contracts (2015), two researches are cited: a simulation that makes use of extreme scenarios of only having temporary rent, which (in the simulation) led to more supply. However, the second cited report (see: Platform31, 2014) also discusses numerous

negative consequences that temporary rental contracts can have on renters and liveability, and that the assumption of this narrative (and also narrative 1) rests on (too) little empirical evidence, but this part of the report is largely ignored in the debate. Moreover, an experiment was conducted in Amsterdam where one housing corporation made use of temporary contracts for youth. Though partly successful, an issue that became apparent in this experiment was that those having to move out when their contract ended, often struggled to find new housing as waiting lists for public housing often are longer than the time these youth contracts last.

The central premise of this narrative is inevitable: renters will move out when their contract ends, and move somewhere else to make room for someone else in the target group. However, the assumption that those that have to move out will then, without issue be able to move up in their housing career is questionable, especially in an already tight housing market and waitlists for public housing that exceed the 5 years that these youth contracts last. Furthermore, research has shown that those that have been living precariously previously, are often unable to move up in the housing market (Bobek et al., 2021)

Change of the narrative content throughout the years
This narrative slightly shifts throughout the years, in the early years studied (though depending on the narrator), there often is a more ideological undertone connecting to narrative 1 and the aim to create a functioning housing market and only having public housing to do their 'core job'. However, some narrators also recognize from the beginning onwards that the measure of temporary contracts will not fix the core issue of having a housing shortage and long waiting lists for public housing. Rather it is framed as something to give temporary relief for the overstrained housing market and for youth and other target groups that these contracts are applicable for. In the later years studied, also in the wake of the then more pressing housing shortage, this narrative is used to argue that public housing should remain available for those that really need it.

Narrative 4

Evidence and argumentation
Though empirical evidence and illustrations against temporary contracts already existed in the first years studied, little use is made of those then. Temporary rental contracts already were problematized by academic research (e.g. Huisman, 2016) and reports (e.g. Platform31, 2014), however, these are never referred to in debates when arguing within this narrative, so it remains unclear what the assumptions of this narrative are based on. This takes a turn when the issues caused by temporary contracts start to become a problem for a bigger group of people and research starts to show this (Salomons & Voogt, 2020; Companen 2021). This also can be seen within the debate around this time of 2020/2021, the usage of narrative 4 increases a lot and the narrative starts to

take the upper hand in debate; concrete evidence is adding credibility to this narrative. On top of the policy evaluation, a link with the academic debate also is established in the debates, citing previous research by for example Huisman (2020). As the negative effect of temporary contracts becomes more clear, the use of illustrative cases also increases, these are cases that show how badly people and neighborhoods are affected.

Change of the narrative content throughout the years

As mentioned above, the change of this narrative largely lies in its usage of evidence and argumentation. Furthermore, in the earlier years studied, this narrative was quite scattered, but it really starts to take shape from 2019 onwards. Evidence from the evaluation of law 'doorstroming huurmarkt' (see: Companen, 2021) enables a coherent storyline: 'there is clear evidence that temporary rent does not work out in practice as it was intended to, so limiting possibilities for temporary contracts is the most logical thing to do'.

Narrative 5

Evidence and argumentation

As the evidence and argumentation of other narratives is central in narrative 5, it uses little on its own. However, the questions that are posed within this narrative often have a weak emphasized link to real evidence themselves. For example in a report published in 2014 (see Platform31, 2014), the same questions were posed as in this narrative: are temporary contracts really a good fix the core issue that is housing shortage? And are we not putting renters in precarious situations with the usage of temporary contracts? But just as in narrative 4, these types of reports or other scientific research is never mentioned in debate.

Change of the narrative content throughout the years

The content of this narrative depends on what is debated at that point in time; it moves and grows together with the debate but at its core it always remains skeptical, the argument on the general housing shortage remains consistent and so does its question of 'why are we enabling any temporary rent at all, who benefits from that?'.

To summarize this section, narratives 1 and 2 especially have a poor relation with evidence, its central claims are not rooted in scientific evidence or policy evaluation, additionally, the potential negative

side-effects are not paid attention to. Narrative 3 rather has a poor relationship regarding the evidence of its outcomes, not its mechanisms, disregarding research on negative effect on renters. Narrative 4 has a very strong relationship to policy evaluation and scientific evidence. Narrative 5 questions the evidence of the other four narratives, however, it offers little evidence in return, that might disprove narratives 1, 2, and 3.

These results relate to the previous section (5.1), complexity and empirical claims are often not recognized by politicians, but rather simple solutions that heavily relate to ideological standpoints concerning the relationship between (1) 'the state' and 'the market' and (2) 'those on the supply side (i.e. landlords)' and 'those on the demand side (renters and seekers)' are put forward (Stone, 2002).

5.3 Relationships between narratives

Narratives are often not used alone, problem construction codes are often coded with two or even more narratives: 36% of all problem construction codes to be precise. In figure 7 these relationships are visualized; the broader the line between two narratives, the more often they occur together. This figure further illustrates the two narrative coalitions that exist: that of 1, 2 and 3 that argue in favor of temporary contracts, and that of 4 and 5 that argue against. Narrative 1 and 5 never occur together, narrative 2, 3 and 4 however sometimes occur together, allowing for nuance in the debate.

Figure 7: Linkages between narratives
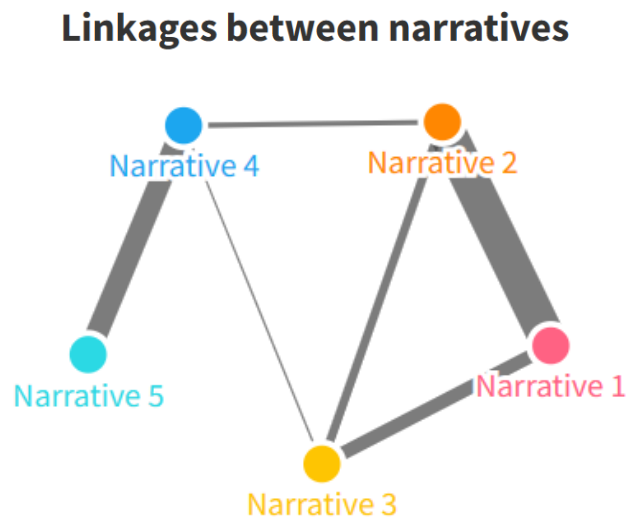
Using narratives together can blur boundaries between narratives and their problem constructions. An example of this is the combination of narrative 1 and 3. The premise of narrative 1 largely concerns the private market, because public housing corporations cannot offer generic contracts for everyone according the law 'doorstroming huurmarkt' (Eng.: law throughput rental market).

Nevertheless, this law is discussed under the term 'doorstroom' (Eng.: throughput) in the context of the public sector, and the argument that is put forward in narrative 3. This becomes clear in the following quote:

"Temporary rental contracts will increase the supply in the private sector and promote the throughput in the public sector. With this, the next step towards a housing market that actually functions as market, is made." (Van der Linde (VVD) in 02/02/2016 plenary debate law doorstroming huurmarkt)

From the quote above it becomes clear that temporary rental contracts are understood to promote throuput in the public sector only, however in the same debate, the mechanism of narrative 2 and 3 are used together with the premise of narrative 1 (more housing supply), see the next quote:

"[...] with more possibilities for customization the throughput on the rental market will be increased. More possibilities for [temporary] contracts means more supply of rental housing." (Madlener (PVV) in 02/02/2016 plenary debate law doorstroming huurmarkt)

However, the mechanism of narrative 3 (individuals moving from public housing to private housing) is incongruent with the premise of narrative 1 (increased supply of private housing). Moreover, the combination of these narratives is rather ironic: the argument central to narrative 3 is to push people from public housing towards the private sector, however, the consequence of the same law (Law throughput rental market) is that the private sector becomes less attractive due to the introduction of flexibility and precarity that follows from that.

Though, on the other hand, the combination of these narratives can also serve as a strength. Everyone involved can be framed as benefitting from temporary contracts: renters, seekers, landlords and the housing market. This particular strength is absent in the 'against' narratives, here the only ones benefitting are renters, seekers and 'the liveability'. This partly explains why narratives 4 and 5 needed the concrete evidence provided by policy evaluation (see: Companen, 2021), to be able to be more convincing.

This section also answers hypothesis 2: temporary rental contracts are argued to be a solution to several problems, wherein temporary contracts are the solution coming before the actual problem. The answer is that this is likely: all in favor narratives (1, 2 and 3) have a different problem construction. Narrative 1 argues that temporary rental contracts will fix the housing market, and allow for more supply. Narrative 2 argues that individuals want more flexibility regarding their housing decisions. Narrative 3 argues that temporary contracts will push people to move on from public housing towards private housing, solving waiting times for public housing. Largely these narratives and their problem constructions are used in line with the law change of the then-discussed proposed law.

However, as discussed in this section, sometimes narratives are used together, with the risk of 'colliding' problem constructions. Furthermore, some narrators built up their total story with the usage of several narratives within the 'in favor of temporary rent' problem constructions, this combination of narratives wherein everyone is argued to be benefitting from temporary rent, almost becomes too good to be true, especially considering the missing link to scientific research. Different problems, which are problematized largely by a neoliberal ideology, are singled out and put together, and temporary rent is pasted repeatedly on this package as 'solution', that will benefit everyone. Moreover, the absence of some narratives (e.g. narrative 1) in general debates, as visualized in figure 4, further confirms hypothesis 2. Only narrating narratives when a law needs to be passed, and not talking about the issue before or after that, could show that the problem is only discussed to legitimize the solution (in this case temporary rental contracts).

5.4 Narratives and policy dynamics

This section reflects on hypothesis 1 and its subsequent visualized framework, and it answers SQ6: How do policy and narrative dynamics on temporary rental contracts relate to policy change theory?

In figure 8, to be found on the next page, the relationship between narratives and policy change is visualized. Two periods of 'policy stability' can be distinguished: the period up until approximately 2021, wherein the legal possibilities for temporary contracts were increasingly allowed, characterizing for this policy period are the narratives largely rooted in (neo-)liberal ideology. The second period starts around 2023, in this period more evidence-based narratives and arguments are informing and legitimizing policy. Though there is a shift, there is no complete policy termination. More legal restrictions have been imposed from 2023 onwards, but possibilities to offer temporary rental contracts are still available, therefore instead of full termination, rather policy is altered.

Interesting is how this alteration is framed and narrated in debate, within narrative 4 the argument of 'the policy has not worked out in practice as intended, so we are turning it back' is often made in 2023, framing it as policy termination. While in reality many exceptions to offer temporary rental contracts remain after the law 'permanent contracts'. This also illustrates the more nuanced debate that took over after 2021, recognizing both the possible negative effects as well as possible positive sides of temporary rent. This is also why both narratives in favor and against are part of the main narrative from 2023 onwards.

This shift in discourse points to a shift in political ideology, though the liberal, pro-free market ideology is still there, it is more nuanced, this is illustrated by the presence of narrative 3 also after the policy alteration. This narrative frames public housing as stepping stone rather than full-fledged housing. However, the very neoliberal narrative 1 is not informing policy anymore from 2023

onwards. Furthermore, narrative 4, which advocates for more governmental regulation, *is* informing policy from 2023 onwards.
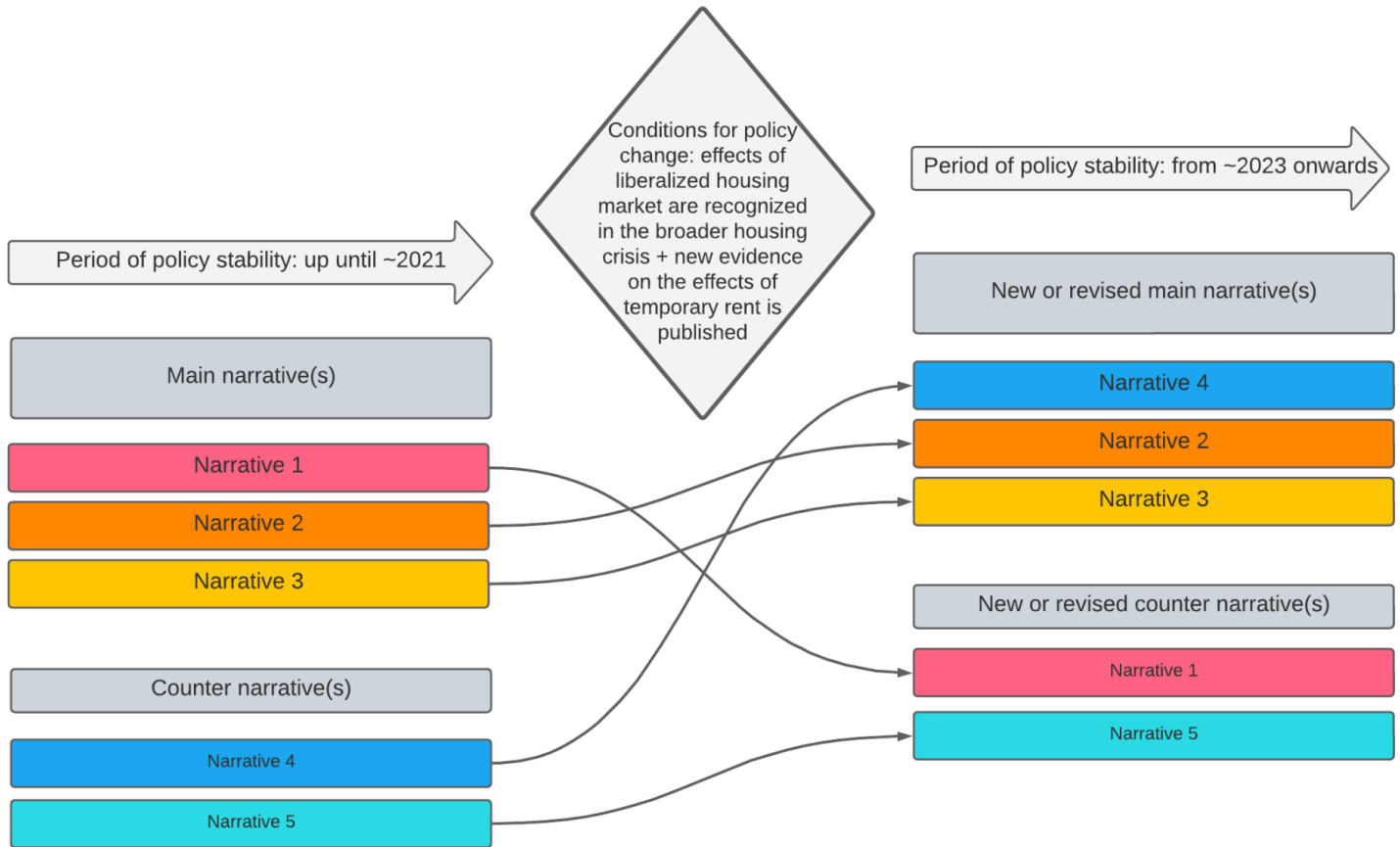

Figure 8: filled in conceptual framework: the relationship between identified narratives and policy change

To answer what has allowed for this shift in policy and narrative, away from further allowing temporary rental contracts, is shown in the rhombus in the middle of figure 8. The three policy change theories discussed in section 2.8 are now reflected upon to understand this shift.

The overall political debate on housing has changed during the time when policy on temporary rental contracts was altered. The housing shortage was one of the main topics of the 2021 national elections, also because the middle class increasingly was and is struggling to find housing (Hochstenbach, 2023). Within this shift of discourse, the negative effects of private investors in the housing market also became a more central point in the discussion. A reintroduction of a minister for

housing and spatial planning and the passing of laws such as 'goed verhuurderschap' (Eng.: good landlordship), further illustrates the consensus that there should be a form of governmental regulation instead of leaving everything to the market.

Following the MSA theory, this shift in the general discourse on housing has allowed for *political momentum*, and therefore a steadier ground for acceptance to also introduce new restrictions on temporary rental contracts. The overall shift from the ideological arguments promoting liberalization and the housing 'market' towards introducing more governmental control again, also shows in narratives and their dynamics on temporary rental contracts. The very neoliberal loaden narrative 1, shifts from being a main narrative to being a counter-narrative: policy is not based on it anymore.

Before this *political momentum*, only the *problem*: negative effect of temporary rental contracts, and *solution:* limit the legal possibilities for temporary rental housing, were present in narrative 4. However, following the MSA theory, this *political momentum* collides with *problem* and *solution* streams around 2021. Allowing for narrative 4 to shift from being a counter-narrative to being a main narrative. Furthermore, the evaluation of temporary rental contracts published in 2021 allowed for narrative 4 and 5 to strengthen their points. Following McBeth & Lybecker (2018), the evaluation allowed for narrative 4 to create a powerful argument: 'the possibility to offer temporary rental contracts did not have the expected effects and comes with many negative side-effects, therefore there is no other logical thing to do than to restrict the usage of these contracts'. The shift in policy is the effect of a shift in politics as well as evidence, also in line with the punctuated equilibrium model.

Finally, the shift in narratives also can be related to the policy generation theory, and with that hypothesis 1: Counter narrative(s) are informed by those individuals and factors neglected in the then current policy culture. When policy changes substantially, it is expected that counter-narrative(s) take over and become the new main narrative.
This hypothesis is partly true: narrative 4 which initially is a counter-narrative, represents those who were neglected by the then current policy: those renters and seekers who were and would be experiencing the negative consequences of temporary rental contracts. However with the shift in policy, narrative 4 becomes part of the main narrative group, and in debate and policy renters and seekers are paid attention to more explicitly. Relating to the policy evaluation of Companen (2021), narratives 2 and 3 adapt and remain part of the main narrative group. However narrative 1 is rooted in such an ideological argument that provides little room for nuance and adaptation within the narrative, the main premise of narrative 1 also cannot be proved by the evaluation, therefore it becomes a counternarrative. With this shift, debate has shifted away from these contracts being useful in order to achieve a functioning housing market, instead to focus shifts to a more nuanced version wherein temporary contracts are again seen as 'useful in some cases'. However, important to note is that narrative 5 remains a counternarrative, the mismatch between supply and demand in the public housing sector is for example not tackled and temporary contracts for target groups remain a legal possibility in the public sector. Temporary contracts for youth for instance, have been functioning as 'temporary relief' for nine years already, and will continue to do so in the future.

5.5 Answering the main questions

Now that all six subquestions and three hypotheses have been discussed, the main research questions can be answered.

The first main research question central to this study is the following:

1. *How have narratives and their narrators on temporary rental contracts in the Netherlands changed, evolved and adapted between 2015 and 2023?*

Narratives have changed regarding their content, as well as their presence. The presence of narratives largely flows with the important debates held on the topic of temporary contracts, some narratives remain present throughout all years (e.g. narrative 2) and some are only present during important debates (e.g. narrative 1). The usage of some remains stable from 2015 to 2023 (e.g. narrative 1), while the usage of others decreases (e.g. narrative 1 and 5) or increases (e.g. narrative 4). Regarding the content of narratives, there are also some changes. Changes in content are generally made to remain relevant or increase the relevance of a narrative. Changes include the increasing relation to evidence and evaluation of narrative 4, and the shift away from the demand side to only the supply side of housing in narrative 2, in line with the increasing housing shortage.

The narratives that narrators use and how this changes, largely depends on the ideology and position of narrators on the political spectrum. Those politicians that have an outspoken ideological standpoint on the topic cling to their narratives, and this is also reflected in their voting behavior. However politicians in and around the political center are more flexible in the narratives that they use, using both in favor and against narratives throughout the years studied, however a slight shift can be seen to using more 'against' narratives. What does clearly change for these center parties is their voting behavior. Therefore, these center parties have a weaker link between the narratives that they use and their voting behavior.

The second main research question is the following:

2. *How do these narratives and their dynamics relate to policy change?*

The change in the presence of single narratives does not necessarily relate to policy change. Though narrative 1 has shifted from being a main narrative to being a counter-narrative, it is still present during debates later on, and the decline of narrative 3 does not mean that it became a counternarrative after the policy change. However, further research conducted at a later point in time is necessary to fully draw conclusions on this, it could for example be that narrative 1 will slowly fade away, but this, only time can teach.

Nevertheless, the shift in overall presence of 'in favour' narratives 1, 2 and 3, and 'against' narratives 4 and 5 does relate to policy change. In the earlier years studied, the against narratives compromise

about one third of overall problem constructions, however in the later years studied they are at least half of the total problem constructions, and even more in some years.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Like in many advanced-economies, flexibilization and the subsequent precarisation also have seeped into the Dutch rental housing sector, which is in line with (neo-)liberalization politics and policy which have been increasingly implemented from the 1980s onwards. With the in 2016 introduced legal possibility to offer generic temporary contracts in the private rental sector, this shift has ultimately allowed for temporary contracts to become the norm in the Netherlands. However, since then, a shift can be noted in both discourse and policy concerning housing in the Netherlands, this shift can be characterized as *post-neoliberal*. This shift also has and is affecting temporary rental contracts, in 2023 a new law was passed by the House of Representatives, which is limiting the legal possibilities on generic temporary contracts again. This study has utilized the NPF (Narrative Policy Framework) and policy change theory, to develop a methodological lens to study how this shift in policy relates to narratives told by politicians in the House of Representatives, and in turn, how these narratives relate to policy dynamics.

Five narratives are distinguished, each having their own problem construction, characters and emplotment. These narratives have a varying presence in the overall discourse on temporary rental contracts. Moreover, they also have a varying influence on policy; some narratives are part of the 'main narratives' and are directly underpinning policy while others are part of the 'counter-narratives' group. The latter tends to emphasize those things and people underemphasized in the then current policy. The overall presence of these narrative groups aligns with the policy alteration: the 'against temporary rent' narratives have been gaining presence from 2019 onwards, leading up to the policy change in 2023.

Furthermore, the different narratives and narrative groups illustrate the constant tension between 'housing for profit' and 'housing for people, or in other words: who should benefit from housing policies; renters and seekers, or landlords and the market? This constant tension, is why the ideology of politicians plays an important role in the narrative they narrate, and how they narrate these narratives. The further away parties are from the center of the political spectrum and therefore have a stronger ideological relationship with 'the market' or 'the people', the stronger their relationship is with narratives that strongly relate to this. However, parties in the center of the political spectrum generally narrate several narratives, though a slight shift can be noted towards using more 'against' narratives. In line with this shift, the voting behaviour of these center parties also changes.

Within the shift in policy and discourse, there also is a shift in the usage of evidence and policy evaluation. Whereas before often new law further allowing temporary rent, often has a poor relationship with evaluation of the previous round of the widening of legal possibilities. The legal shift happening in 2023 is very much rooted in policy evaluation. This lack of evidence before the policy

shift also is apparent in the narratives which were part of the main narrative group then. Narrative 1, 2 and 3 all have a weak link with evidence and evaluation, mainly having ideological underpinnings and arguing that the expected outcomes are 'logical' and 'common sense'. Although they are based on little evidence, these three narratives are still very powerful in the earlier years studied, then even narrated by parties on the left of the political spectrum. The success of these three narratives also lies in their ability to frame everyone as a benefittor: renters, seekers, landlords and the market are all framed to be benefitting from temporary rent, especially if these narratives are combined. Additionally, the presence in debate, in combination with how these narratives are combined together by narrators and the different problem constructions of these three 'in favour' narratives, all point towards the solution coming before the problem.

However during political debate leading up to the policy alteration in 2023, narrative 4 increasingly is used, two 'focussing events' are aiding in this. The first is the shift in the Dutch housing debate which can be characterized as *post-neoliberal*, from around 2021 onwards more governmental regulation has been introduced on the Dutch housing market. The second is the new evidence and evaluation published: the official evaluation of law 'doorstroming huurmarkt' of Companen (2021). And a link is established with scientific debate, which takes a critical standpoint towards temporary rent, illustrating a shift towards more *evidence-based* policy making.

These results also lead to new questions, therefore this final section is dedicated to discussing recommendations for further research.

The first recommendation for further research is to utilize the basis of this research in a few years time to see how narratives and policy have developed over the years, and to better answer the question 'how do narratives and their dynamics relate to policy change?'. Future research would also be able to further confirm (or reject) hypothesis 1 and see how narratives that were once part of the 'main narrative' group and now of the 'counter-narrative group', will develop in the future.

Though excluded in this study, the topic of flex-housing serves as an interesting topic in politics for further research. Though limits have been imposed on temporary rent, flex-housing is currently framed as one of the solutions to the housing shortage and 'crisis' in the Netherlands. Questions could be: Are the promises made by politicians really fulfilled in practice, and how are the living conditions for these houses in practice? What groups end up living in these types of temporary houses? Do these temporary houses serve to fulfill a demand from renters, or do they contribute to precarious living?

Finally, further research is needed to better understand the *post-neoliberal* shift discussed in this study. Questions could for example be: What is the relationship between the shift towards evidence-based policymaking, and the shift away from neoliberalism? Can this post-neoliberal trend also can be noticed in other public service domains?

Chapter 7: Epilogue

This final chapter is dedicated to a reflection upon this thesis, the results, its limitations and relevance. Finally, a reflection on the research process is given.

Two main limitations of this research are recognized concerning the data collection, and the results. The first limitation is that only debates have been studied. Debates only give a peek into what goes into policy-making, much more goes on behind the scenes such as lobbying and other mainly private conversations and discussions. Policy discourse and change do not take place in a vacuum (Hewitt, 2009). These factors all also feed into informing the problem construction and solution drafting. Having said that, the goal of this study is mainly to find how temporary rent as a solution is legitimized to others, for this goal, debates are a suited subject of study.

The second limitation concerns the comparison of the usage of narratives on the one hand and policy change in combination with the voting behavior of parties on the other hand. In several instances, law change of temporary contracts is packaged with something else. For instance, the 2016 law 'doorstroming huurmarkt' (Eng.: law throughput rental market), was packaged together with income dependent rent increase for renters in public housing. And the proposed amendment of Koerhuis in 2021 was part of another law proposal. These law 'packages' also can play a role in the further widening of legal possibilities of temporary rent, if a political party agrees with one part X of the law but not with part Y (which could be on temporary rent), they could narrate against temporary rent, but still vote in favor of the total law.

Results of this research are firstly relevant in order to better understand Dutch (housing) politics and policy dynamics. It shows the role that narratives have, how policy relates to evidence and ideology. It gives insight into how decisions are informed and legitimized and how that subsequently is framed by politicians. This study also highlights the *post-neoliberal* shift that is currently taking place in the Netherlands. This study is also relevant for the broader narrative studies and NPF, it can serve as an example of how narrative research can be conducted on a national level and which factors to account for in the domain of housing, such as ideology.

This study aims to underline the power a narrative can have in policy. The main message and therefore recommendation for (policy) practice is to not underestimate the power of a good narrative, when trying to understand debate and when navigating oneself in debates on (housing) policy. Finally, this study aims to underline the risks of policy rooted in (ideological) narrative(s) instead of policy rooted in evidence and evaluation. In order to draft and execute policy that positively impacts people, constant and critical evaluation is more important than telling a good story.

This very last section is dedicated to reflect on the process of researching and writing this thesis. In hindsight, I would have done several things differently. First of all, I would have used a more pragmatic approach for data collection. It was almost impossible to find studies using the NPF which described their methodology in detail. But, as also argued within critical discourse analysis: every different topic will need a different methodology, there is no 'one size fits all'. I feel like I wasted time in the beginning of the research process, looking for a descriptive methodology and theory that would 'perfectly' fit my thesis. In hindsight, I was more so looking for reassurance from existing literature, than having no clue how to design and conduct research in order to answer my questions. Playing into this was also that I never had used narratives or even discourse as a phenomenon to structure a methodological and theoretical lens around previously. Nevertheless, I already had a rough idea what the research process would look like and what exactly I wanted to find out, in the back of my mind. In hindsight I would therefore have started in an earlier stage with collecting data, designing the codebook and the coding process.

Though this is easier said than done, in hindsight I also would have specified my main research questions and subquestions before designing the codebook. Some of the codes in the codebook are redundant for the questions that I wanted to answer, I for example did not utilize the character codes in the analysis, but only in compiling the narratives. Relating to this, I also would have set clearer hypotheses and subquestions to easier structure my thesis around. Instead, I had to constantly rearrange the many sources and information I had.

Of course, taking into account the limitations of this research discussed before in this chapter, the outcomes of this study do appear convincing to me. The goal of this thesis is not necessarily to find out 'truth' but rather to find out how this 'truth' is socially constructed by politicians. As all debates on the topic of temporary rent, illustrating these constructions of 'truth', were thoroughly searched and analyzed, giving a comprehensive overview of the framing of these contracts, I believe this database is fit to answer the questions posed in this thesis.

Finally, as also discussed in section 5.4, policy change on the topic of temporary rent is still very fresh and was largely happening when I was working on this thesis. The law 'permanent rental contracts' will be implemented in 2024 (if approved by the Senate), and national elections, which are very likely to have housing high up on the agenda again, are coming up. Therefore it is impossible to say what the shift described in this thesis will look like in the future. Nevertheless, I do not see this as something that would necessarily make this thesis less convincing, rather it makes it more interesting to look back on this thesis in the (near) future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of analyzed debates

Title	Date	Type of debate	Relevance (amount of quotations coded)
Integral vision on the housing market	21/01/2015	General debate	22
General debate on shrinkage of rural areas	16/04/2015	General debate	5
Integral vision on the housing market	04/06/2015	General debate	13
Integral vision on the housing market	11/06/2015	General debate	44
Integral vision on the housing market	26/11/2015	General debate	41
Integral vision on the housing market	02/12/2015	General debate	31
Plenary debate law temporary contracts for youth	10/12/2015	Law change	145
General debate e.g. on shrinkage in rural areas	14/01/2016	General debate	10
Plenary debate law doorstroming huurmarkt	02/02/2016	New law proposal	491
Plenary debate law doorstroming huurmarkt	04/02/2016	New law proposal	201
Integral vision on the housing market	30/03/2016	General debate	12
Integral vision on the housing market	25/05/2016	General debate	53
Integral vision on the housing market	06/06/2016	General debate	35
General debate	06/07/2016	General debate	21
General debate on e.g. rental policy	09/10/2016	General debate	65

General debate on e.g. rental policy	26/10/2016	General debate	51
Integral vision on the housing market	08/12/2016	General debate	41
Debate on veegwet wonen	12/12/2016	Law change	73
General debate on evaluation of vacancy law	24/02/2017	General debate	37
Integral vision on the housing market	07/06/2017	General debate	38
Debate on annual report	14/06/2017	General debate	14
Debate on budget for housing and civil service for 2018	11/12/2017	General debate	58
Integral vision on the housing market	31/01/2018	General debate	21
Integral vision on the housing market	25/04/2018	General debate	8
Integral vision on the housing market	17/05/2018	General debate	15
Integral vision on the housing market	22/05/2018	General debate	2
Integral vision on the housing market	21/06/2018	General debate	44
Integral vision on the housing market	26/09/2018	General debate	34
Integral vision on the housing market	27/09/2018	General debate	28
Integral vision on the housing market	18/10/2018	General debate	8
Debate on budgeting for housing and space	12/11/2018	General debate	64
Integral vision on the housing market	28/11/2018	General debate	20
Integral vision on the housing market	06/03/2019	General debate	68
Integral vision on the housing market	19/06/2019	General debate	80
Integral vision on the housing market	27/06/2019	General debate	6
Debate on budgeting for 2020	11/11/2019	General debate	75
Debate on budgeting internal affairs	13/11/2019	General debate	29
Integral vision on the housing market	11/12/2019	General debate	14
Integral vision on the housing market	12/12/2019	General debate	28

Integral vision on the housing market	29/01/2020	General debate	13
Debate on temporary law for temporary extensions of temporary contracts	15/04/2020	New law proposal	276
Integral vision on the housing market	18/06/2020	General debate	25
Debate on budgeting for 2021	09/11/2020	General debate	88
Debate on possibilities for rent increase	03/12/2020	Law change	289
Integral vision on the housing market	09/12/2020	General debate	47
Debate on housing law change	08/03/2021	Law change	88
Integral vision on the housing market	03/06/2021	General debate	52
Integral vision on the housing market	24/06/2021	General debate	20
Integral vision on the housing market	16/09/2021	General debate	19
Integral vision on the housing market	01/10/2021	General debate	18
Debate on budgeting for housing and space	15/11/2021	General debate	100
Debate on spatial planning and housing	27/01/2022	General debate	20
Integral vision on the housing market	16/02/2022	General debate	25
Integral vision on the housing market	12/04/2022	General debate	40
Debate on market function within the rental housing market	22/06/2022	General debate	64
Integral vision on the housing market	30/06/2022	General debate	98
Integral vision on the housing market	20/09/2022	General debate	40
Debate on budgeting for 2023	07/11/2022	General debate	20
Integral vision on the housing market	09/02/2023	General debate	35
Plenary debate law goed verhuurderschap (1)	22/02/2023	New law proposal	30
Plenary debate law goed verhuurderschap (2)	22/02/2023	New law proposal	33
Plenary debate law permanent rental contracts	23/03/2023	New law proposal	442

Plenary debate law permanent rental contracts	11/04/2023	New law proposal	219
Plenary debate law permanent rental contracts	11/05/2023	New law proposal	274

Appendix 2: Codebook

'Static' codes
Narrative representative → Political party or ministers, code the whole parts that they are talking (only relevant if they are talking about temporary rental contracts).

VVD
CDA
PVV
SP
PVDA
GROENLINKS
CU
D66
Van Haga
Van Vliet
SGP
Minister Blok
Minister Ollongren
Minister De Jonge

Year of document/debate → all text in the document is coded with this code

2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023

NPF codes

GENERAL NOTE: When in debate, and it is clear that things said by an individual is not constituting their 'own' narrative, this will not be coded (for example when asking questions, making assumptions about others, referring to others, referring to the past, repeating others). However, if valuable, these will be noted down in the 'uncovering narratives' document, the same goes for when a politician is stating that they are disagreeing/do not share with their parties' narrative. The reason for this is that SQ4 will otherwise be hard to analyze.

GENERAL NOTE: in debate, things said by for example the moderator, will not be coded. If valuable for this research in some way, these things will be noted down in the 'uncovering narratives' doc.
Narrative origins
Central questions: What are the origins of the narrative: what is the cause of the issue that precarious (i.e. temporal rent) should solve according to the narrative? How are the foundations of the issue constructed?

NOTE: problem description/construction can be coded quite broadly, do not be too limited with the amount of text coded, can be several sentences, even whole paragraphs.
NOTE: all problem construction codes (except the passive ones) are to be double coded with the narrative codes

Problem construction→ only to be coded if in direct relation to temporary rent

Problem construction [in favour] → problem description in relationship with when temporary rent is used/framed as solution to problem x. Including extending temporary contracts during covid. Only code when narrator is actively representing their narrative.
Code: the whole problem description; why TR is the good solution; why is it necessary
Passive problem construction [in favour] → talking about the past/other narrators
Problem construction [against] → problem description in relationship with when solutions are being posed against temporary rent. Problem description is given of problems caused by temporary rent. Including arguments of why we should ban temporary contracts. Why should we not want temporary rental contracts?
Code: problem description of why TR is bad; issues TR has caused; why should TR be limited/abandoned
Passive problem construction [against] → talking about the past/other narrators

Double code all problem constructions with their subsequent narratives
NOTE 1: see further description of narratives in chapter 4
NOTE 2: only code when they are actively arguing for this narrative
NOTE 3: if more than one narrative can be found in argument code all relevant narratives
NOTE 4: no clear narrative = no code

Narrative 1 → "Temporary rental contracts will create extra supply on the rental market, they help to fix the market, helps benevolent landlords to fulfill their hero role, and helps home seekers."
Narrative 2 → "Home seekers as well as landlords want the possibility to rent temporarily but are restricted by current law."

Narrative 3 "Temporary rental contracts are a good tool to target 'scheefwoners' and help out those on waiting lists for public housing."

Narrative 4 "We shouldn't enable more Temporary rental contracts, it will only put renters in a precarious situation and it enables malicious landlords to conduct malpractice."

Narrative 5 "Why are we enabling (more) Temporary rental contracts? Are we really solving the issue that we're trying to solve with it?"

Characters

Central question: who are the characters in the narratives?

Characters [assigned to single word (groups), every single mention of words where character is clear, is coded. For example if 1 politicians frames landlords as hero, and later in passage 'landlords' are mentioned again, this also will be coded as 'hero']

NOTE: when the role of a character is not yet clear during the coding process, but it is apparent that they do play a role, code most likely and add comment on the quoted text, with what it also could be

Hero → also can need aid, not always the one providing aid, will/tries/proposes to save the victim [is going to act, should act, will be aided to act]

Villain → cause of the issue, advancer of the issue, behavior harms others, likely to benefit from status quo (at the expense of others)

Victim → suffers, needs help, likely to benefit if policy that is argued for is acted upon

Mentor → guides and aids the hero [can be politicians, law, market etc.]

Shapeshifter → is both victim (burden bearer) and villain (benefittor/cause of issue)

Personification → code single word, if no overlap with 'character' code double code quotation with character code.

Personification [concept] → e.g. the market

Personification [institution] /organization → e.g. 'sector', the second chamber

Personification [legislation] → rules, laws, contracts etc.

Personification [object] → e.g. 'the street'

Emplotment

Central questions: how is a storyline created out of the narrative elements? How are solutions linked to a problem? What is the moral of the story?

NPW: Narrative policy window [how is the policy window narrated?, why should we act NOW?]

NPW [Sense of urgency] → why we should act now, in this very moment

NPW [doom scenario] → what (negative things) are going to happen when no intervention is going to take place

NPW [evidence] → policy evaluation, new scientific evidence. Partly ties in with policy MSA stream

NPW [societal trend] → (new) societal trends makes society want/need this now (implicit), or society explicitly asks for it. Also includes 'the market'. Ties in with the society MSA stream

NPW [political consensus] → e.g. politics has realized, NOW many politicians will support this idea. Ties in with the political MSA stream

NPW [boost] → we need to even further boost current situation to get results that we want. Also including counterbalance: we need to do this for counterbalance

NPW [covid] → act now because of covid

(NOA) Nature of argument → only to be coded in relation to NPW: why should or shouldn't action be taken. Difference from NPW is that NOA focusses more on the nature of argument put forward rather than the why NOW question.

NOA [Normative argument] → it should be like x, 'zou moeten', likely ideological, e.g. preferred relationship between welfare state and market

NOA [Scientific argument] → policy evaluation, likely to include numbers, according to x and y research…, research has shown…

NOA [Illustrative case] → "person x cannot find a house and I talked to them and they are having a very hard time, so we should.."

NOA [common sense] → e.g. "if you think logically then …"

NOA [own belief] → "I really think…" "I really believe that.."

Future expectation → expectations/assumptions about the future regarding temporary rent and new law surrounding it. For example: if we implement this, x and y will happen. If these are mentioned in hindsight [e.g. when implementing this 6 years ago they thought x and y would happen, but…] also code these parts under this code.
NOTE: Do not forget to also put passages under this code in the uncovering narratives doc.

Key terms → that contribute to framing and the narrative, these are coded with crtl+f [+search terms] and the smart coding feature.

Key term [flex] = [search: flex] flex, flexibel, flexhuur, flexcontract, flexwonen,

Key term [precair] = [search: precair, onzeker, kwetsba, penibel, woonzekerheid, antikraak, uitzet] precair, onzeker, kwetsbaar, penibel, woonzekerheid woononzekerheid, antikraak, uitzetten, huisuitzettingen

Key term [scheefwonen] = [search: scheefwone] scheefwonen, scheefwoner(s)

Key term [doorstroom] = [search: doorstro] doorstroom, doorstromen, doorstroming

Key term [tijdelijk] = [search: tijdelijk] tijdelijke huur, tijdelijke contracten

Metaphor → 1 word (group) making/assuming comparison/similarity with other word, likely to be 1 word, can also be group of words. [for example healthy housing market]

Policy evaluation

Central questions: How is past policy evaluated by different politicians? It it argued to keep the status quo or to argue for policy change?

NOTE: only use this code when someone talks about past policy and is evaluating that, can be negative and positive or neutral. Likely to be used in combination with problem construction. Code can also be used when evaluation is used and someone argues for further enabling status quo, keeping status quo or limiting status quo, the different subcodes are to distinguish between the type of argument used.
NOTE: likely full sentence(s) are coded, the evaluation needs to be substantiated in order for it to be coded.
NOTE: one passage can be coded with several policy evaluation codes

> **Policy evaluation [research]** Scientific research argument, includes academic research, 'official' policy evaluations, research conducted by media.
> **Policy evaluation [common sense]** 'Common sense' argument: "it is logical"
> **Policy evaluation [normative]** Ideological arguments, 'should be' arguments. Also includes ideological arguments around e.g. renter rights and protection
> **Policy evaluation [illustrative case]** Illustrative case argument (policy x has affected this individual so we should change/keep certain policy), telling stories about real world people and their issues
> **Policy evaluation [citizen discourse]**/ discourse in society: when politicians have talked with citizens and they use what they got from those talk in their arguments, or when citizens have reached out to them, or what politicians have heard around them
> **Policy evaluation [legal constraints]** → in practice laws do not work out as they should/was intended. Or there are legal constraints to current laws, so that is why new policy should be implemented
> **Policy evaluation [negative outcome]** → unintended outcome/consequence of a law, so that is why it should be changed
> **Policy evaluation [none]** → when it is verbalized that 'official' evaluation is lacking. Important here is that an opponent is likely to say this about another politician making illegitimate claims, therefore it is important to go back and code the part wherein the politician is making (perceived) illegitimate claims/arguments wherein policy evaluation is lacking. Otherwise, mention this in comment of code.
> **Policy evaluation [covid]** → covid as cause of issues, we need policy change to cope with the new covid situation and what it causes on the housing market
> **Policy evaluation [unclear]** → unclear on what the politicians is basing their argument.

Appendix 3: Overview of Dutch political parties and their political stance

CDA (part of the coalition 27/10/2017 t/m 2023)
(incl. Minister De Jonge)
>   Christian democrats - center-right

CU (part of the coalition 27/10/2017 t/m 2023)
>   Christian democrats - center-left

D66 (part of the coalition 27/10/2017 t/m 2023)
(incl. Minister Ollongren)
>   Progressive liberals - center

GroenLinks
>   'Green' party - left

PvdA (part of the coalition t/m 27/10/2017)
>   Socio-democrats - center-left

PVV
>   Populist - extreme-right socially, however economically more towards the center

SGP
>   Christian reformed religious party - right

SP
>   Democratic socialists/left wing populists - left

Van Haga
>   Conservative liberals - right

Van Vliet
>   Conservative liberal/populism - right

VVD (part of the coalition 2015-2023)
(incl. Minister Blok)
>   Conservative liberals - right

Omtzigt
>   Christian democrat - center

Appendix 4 - Voting behavior of parties

Note: parties that have not been present in debates analyzed are included in 'others'

2015: Law temporary contracts for youth, 121 in favor out of 150

In favor
VVD - 40
PvdA - 36
CDA - 13
D66 - 12
CU - 5
GroenLinks - 4
SGP - 3
Van Vliet - 1
Others - 7

Against
SP - 15
PVV - 12
Others - 2

2016: Law 'doorstroming huurmarkt', 117 in favour out of 150

In favor
VVD - 40
PvdA - 36
CDA - 13
D66 - 12
CU - 5
SGP - 3
Van Vliet - 1
Others - 7

Against
SP - 15
PVV - 12
GroenLinks - 4
Others - 2

2023: law permanent rental contracts 107 in favor out of 149

In favor

D66 - 24
PVV - 17
CDA - 14
SP - 9
PvdA - 9
GroenLinks - 8
CU - 5
SGP - 3
Omtzigt 1
DENK - 3
Others - 14

Against

VVD - 34
Van Haga - 3
Others - 5