



NATIONAL RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY

Narratives for or against change: a Narrative Policy Framework perspective on policy debates in Moscow

HSE April conference 2020

Schlauffer, C., Uldanov, A., Albert, V., Gafurova, D., Makhmutova, M.

cschlauffer@hse.ru

Introduction

- Actors use stories – or narratives – to communicate and decide about public policy
- Policy narratives have become increasingly important in public policy research because:
 - Policy debates are full of narratives
 - Narratives can influence policy decisions
- Development of the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) in recent years

Narrative Policy Framework (NPF)

- The NPF is a theoretical framework to explain the role of narratives in the policy process
- It provides guidance of how to empirically study narratives
- The NPF is a positivist, deductive, mostly quantitative approach.

Purpose and research questions

Purpose: Apply the NPF to salient policy debates in Moscow

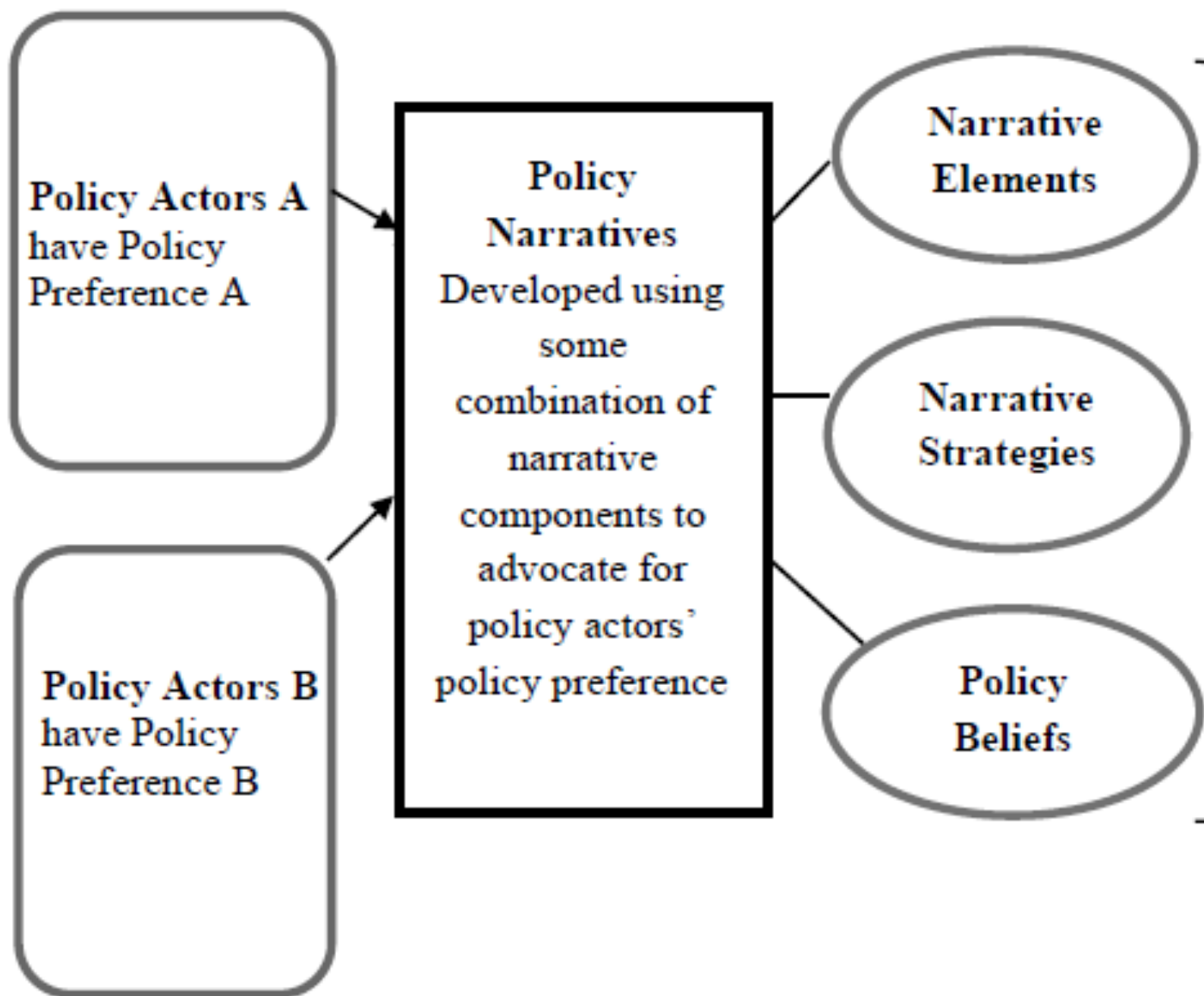
- Waste management policy
- Housing renovation policy
- Transport policy

Research questions:

1. What policy narratives and narrative strategies are used?
2. How do narratives change over time?
3. Through what channels are policy narratives communicated?

The NPF as a theory

- Policy narratives have structural elements that may be generalizable across time and space: setting, characters (villains, heroes, victims), a plot, a moral of the story
- A policy narrative must feature at least one character and contain a reference to the public policy.



Hypotheses of our project

Actors in favor of the official position will:

1. Focus narratives on solutions and heroes
2. Strategically use the angel shift
3. Contain the policy issue (diffuse benefits / concentrate costs)

Actors resisting the official position will

7. Focus their narrative on problems and victims
8. Strategically use the devil shift
9. Expand issues (concentrating benefits / diffusing costs)

Our empirical approach

- 3 single cases and comparative analysis across cases
- Methods: quantitative and qualitative content analysis of text
- Data:
 - Text on websites and social media
 - Speeches
 - Interviews

Our empirical approach

- Up to now, we have collected 3298 texts from websites and social media
- We now randomly select 600 to systematically code them
- We have developed a coding scheme that includes
 - Characters
 - Policy problems and solutions
 - Plots
 - Causal mechanisms

To be continued!

In a next step,

- we code the texts
- Analyze them quantitatively with descriptive statistics
- Will add a qualitative analysis