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(De)constructing expertise

Comparing knowledge utilisation in the migrant integration ‘crisis’¹

Tiziana Caponio, Alistair Hunter & Stijn Verbeek

Abstract

Crises may provide windows of opportunity for policy analysis, since policymakers are likely to be interested in knowledge which helps them solve their urgent problems. But what if there are deep divisions in policy-oriented research on the nature and very existence of the crisis? This article analyses the migrant integration ‘crisis’ after 2000 in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Italy. The findings demonstrate that what counts as expertise may constantly be contested and produced at times of crisis. The notion of ‘(de)constructing expertise’ is introduced to describe conflict-ridden patterns of knowledge utilisation, where different knowledge claims and experts compete for recognition.

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1. Introduction

Around the turn of the century, in many Western European countries, political and public opinion across the left-right spectrum began to regard the demographic consequences of on-going immigration as a formidable challenge to the integrity of the nation. Terrorist attacks (9/11, Madrid, London) supposedly signifying a ‘clash of civilisations’ added a sense of urgency. In response, migrant integration policies became geared towards assimilating migrants – as individuals – into the ‘national culture’. The remarkably similar policy change in countries as diverse as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Italy is known as the “assimilationist turn” (Joppke and Morawska 2003). This article asks what use, if any, was made of policy-oriented research in the aftermath of the above events, which were perceived as a migrant integration crisis in all three countries.

From an analytical point of view, this question raises an intriguing puzzle. On the one hand, in times of crisis, more instrumental ‘problem-solving’ utilisation of knowledge can be expected, because the problem is perceived as more urgent and a real need to solve it can be assumed. In Haas’ view, “following a shock or crisis, epistemic communities can elucidate the cause-and-effect relationships and provide advice about the likely results of various courses of action” (1992: 15). On the other hand, the migration issue domain in general (including integration) is often said to be prone to so-called ‘fact-free politics’. If knowledge utilisation occurs, symbolic rather than instrumental uses are likely (Boswell 2009). The science and politics of migrant integration are sometimes felt to be ‘worlds apart’.

This article aims to contribute to the literature by going beyond oft-repeated ‘strawman’ arguments critiquing the instrumental problem-solving model of knowledge utilisation. Our primary goal is to generate new theoretical insights by building on Rip’s concept of ‘constructing expertise’ (2003) and key insights from the policy learning literature (Hall 1993). We shall be concerned primarily with the ‘high politics’ - “involving drama, mass mobilisation and conflict expansion” (Scholten and Timmermans 2010: 541) - of migrant integration policy-making rather than with the day-to-day functioning of bureaucratic organisations (Boswell 2009).

In the following sections we present the theoretical framework of our analysis and the research design. Sections 4 and 5 are devoted to the description and comparative discussion of three national case studies: the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Italy. The final section

presents a summary of our analysis together with an acknowledgement of some limitations, and suggests potential implications for both research and practice.

2. Theoretical framework

According to Rich, a systematic comparative analysis of knowledge utilisation should at least distinguish four aspects: different types of knowledge utilisation processes, different types of outcomes, “the area in which the information is being applied”, and “the type of information that is available for purposes of potential utilisation” (Rich 1997: 17-18).

In distinguishing processes from outcomes, we define a *knowledge utilisation process* as a more or less structured series of interactions involving ‘policymakers’, i.e. actors like politicians and bureaucrats. Other actors, including ‘scientific experts’, journalists, and practitioners with applied expertise often participate in knowledge utilisation processes as well. Such actors can be individuals (‘personalities’) or collectivities like formal organisations. For the policymakers involved, knowledge utilisation is esteemed because it potentially strengthens the “myth of instrumental use”, i.e. gives the impression that they use expertise to improve policy output (Boswell 2009: 249; see Dye 1987). However, improved policy output (i.e. instrumental use) is just one type of *knowledge utilisation outcome*., Boswell (2009) identifies two others: the substantiation of pre-existing political preferences, and the legitimisation of actors or organisations (Boswell 2009). In this article we also introduce the expression *knowledge utilisation patterns* to indicate combinations of knowledge utilisation processes and outcomes in specific contexts.

Under scrutiny here is the migrant integration ‘crisis’, which emerged in many Western European countries more or less simultaneously after 2000. It is important at the outset to clarify our use of the word ‘crisis’ in this context. Certain objective features, such as demographic changes in the quantity and diversity of immigrants in European countries and acts of political violence and terrorism led to a perception of crisis by political and media actors which was widely shared among the general public. The proportion of citizens in EU-15 member states who believed that ‘multicultural society has reached its limits’ increased between 1997 and 2003, to almost two-thirds of the population (Coenders et al. 2005).

In response to this, policymakers across Europe made an “assimilationist turn” (Joppke and Morawska 2003). We focus on the possible role of policy analysis in this shift. In theory, it is possible that there was no knowledge utilisation process at all in these countries and that the new policy was formulated without any reference to expertise or scientific

knowledge. Perhaps it was just a matter of “powering” (Heclo 1974): policymakers adopted a new migrant integration approach because their parliamentary majority enabled them to do so.

The use of expert knowledge might also be hampered because no policy-oriented information or research is available. Even a cursory look at migrant integration studies in Western Europe, though, shows that this precondition was fulfilled. As the issue became salient politically, more and more research on migrant integration topics was conducted, much of which was supported financially by national governments or supranational institutions. In this respect, one of the key insights from the policy learning literature is salient, namely that learning can involve different kinds of information. Following Hall’s (1993) pathbreaking work, it has become commonplace to distinguish between first order information (settings of instruments), second order information (instruments), and third order information (the broad overall goal of a policy). Similarly, in the literature on policy frames (Schön and Rein 1994) it has been argued that social scientists can either provide support for existing policy frames or contribute, consciously or not, to the (re)framing of an issue themselves (Verbeek 2011).

How might the perception of 'crisis' in the migrant integration domain influence possible knowledge utilisation processes and knowledge utilisation outcomes? At times of crisis, a greater willingness to base policies on expert knowledge can be assumed (Haas 1992). In structural terms, i.e. looking at the structure of relationships between the policymaking and scientific spheres (Wittrock 1991), this implies that experts rather than policymakers take primacy in a knowledge utilisation process, because the latter are really willing to learn how to deal with an apparently urgent problem. At the same time, a clear division of roles between the two categories of actors will occur, with experts engaged in ‘enlightening’ policymakers on the problems at hand.

However a crisis, it can be argued, makes more apparent the different ‘timescapes’ (Boswell 2009; Scholten 2011) associated with peer-reviewed academic research and with electoral politics. The slowness of rigorous science contrasts sharply with the sense of urgency characterising policy-making processes during a crisis. In such a context, the assumption that knowledge must be produced *before* the crisis in order to be utilised may be problematic. Instead, it can be hypothesised that individual relations and reputations will be as important in selecting the ‘relevant knowledge’ as more abstract scientific criteria. Hence a more fluid - processual - understanding of knowledge appears necessary. After all, experts can ‘make policies’ themselves as members of government-sponsored commissions or as individual consultants. Again, the policy learning literature is informative here: “learning is

the output of a series of communications, not its input; in this sense it is generated rather than disseminated” (Freeman 2006: 379). In times of crisis what counts as expertise is probably more often interactively constructed in the knowledge utilisation process itself rather than established *ex-ante*. The 'traditional' division between producers and users of information, between teachers and learners, becomes less clear-cut.

Shifting our attention to knowledge utilisation outcomes, which is a core element of our empirical study, Boswell argues that in areas like migration policy, “[p]olicymakers ... are least likely to use research to adjust output. However, they may well draw on knowledge to legitimise their activities or substantiate their preferences” (Boswell 2009: 239-240). It is an open empirical question whether in the context of the perceived migrant integration ‘crisis’ instrumental functions will be observed at all. Furthermore, it should be noted that the motto ‘never waste a good crisis’ may not only appeal to policymakers. A crisis can attract the attention of various actors including policy analysts based in universities, independent research institutes, or think-thanks who, in the interests of furthering their reputation or ideological values, may aspire to participate in policymaking (Hoppe 2005). Hence one should not only ask whether the knowledge utilisation process had an instrumental, substantiating, or legitimising function, but also whether the knowledge utilisation process had different functions for different participants.

To adequately capture the social aspect of science-society relationships, i.e. the fact that scientists achieve expert status in interaction with (potential) audiences, Rip (2003) coined the term “constructing expertise”. It seems appropriate, however, to add the logical counterpart of *deconstructing* expertise, because eroding the “epistemic authority” of competing claims and claimants can be expected to be part of the game as well (Herbst 2003, cited in Boswell 2009). “Deconstructing expertise” may not only involve targeting inconsistencies in experts' testimony, but also attacking their personal credibility and alleged biases (Caudill 2007). By introducing the notion of ‘deconstructing expertise’ we aim to go beyond many authors’ inclination to only use a “grab bag” (Rich 1997: 18) category when describing non-instrumental forms of knowledge utilisation. The next section presents the rationale behind our selection of case countries.

3. Methodology

Our research design follows the principles of ‘most dissimilar’ case selection, combined with an *ex ante* – *ex post* analysis. We selected three countries (Britain, Italy, and the Netherlands)

which, prior to 2000, exemplified quite dissimilar patterns of expert knowledge utilisation in this policy domain (see Table 1 below). By analysing cases which differed greatly before the ‘crisis’, our conclusions will be strengthened if we are able to identify salient features of knowledge utilisation at times of crisis which led to similar policy outcomes.

For the DIAMINT international project on ‘Science-Society Dialogues on Migrant Integration in Europe’ (see the Introduction to this Special Issue), we deployed secondary sources, document analysis, and media content analysis. Furthermore, 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted with actors involved in knowledge utilisation processes (academics, consultants, civil servants, and politicians).

Britain, Italy, and the Netherlands figure among the countries where the perception of the migrant integration ‘crisis’ was strongest (see Transatlantic Trends 2011). In Britain, a major shift in attitudes occurred after 2000, according to a widely-cited monthly survey of “most important issues” by the polling firm Ipsos-Mori. Similarly in the Netherlands, “negativity was greatest in the turbulent first years of the new millennium” (SCP 2009: 28). In Italy, the Lega Nord, a populist party with a strong base in Northern Italy, scored major electoral successes after 2000.

<Insert table 1 about here>

Table 1 summarises the pre-crisis differences in terms of knowledge utilisation processes and outcomes. In the early phase of the UK case, government funding to universities was initially targeted at generating academic knowledge, not policy-relevant knowledge (Banton 2011). More formalised attempts at dialogue, like the Home Office Advisory Committee on Race Relations Research (1969-75), failed (Banton 1985). Regarding think-tank expertise, an intermittent ‘engineering’ model operated (Hoppe 2005), in a context where politicians had already set the course of policy direction. This contrasts with the situation in the Netherlands in the late 1970s and 1980s, where a remarkable “technocratic symbiosis” pertained (Rath 1991). Scientists initially contributed directly to policymaking in the area, but in the 1990s this technocratic knowledge utilisation process disappeared as the topic of migrant integration became more politicized (Scholten 2011). A different pattern emerges again in Italy. During the early period of research-policy dialogues on migrant integration, a general trend of political primacy on this issue was punctuated by two technocratic episodes, in the form of the Contri Commission in 1993 and the Commission for the Integration of Immigrants in the late

1990s. The brevity and ultimate failure of these episodes was symptomatic of politicians' lack of confidence in the capacity of social scientists to rationalise the public debate over migrant integration (Caponio 2010).

In terms of Boswell's (2009) typology, in Britain there was little direct instrumental use of research in policymaking in the early decades (Banton 1985). Instead, a process of 'knowledge creep' occurred (Weiss 1977), whereby academic knowledge – notably the concept of 'race relations' – diffused into other realms of society: politics, the civil service, and the media (Bleich 2011). Think-tank research, on the other hand, provided evidence of discrimination and was used to substantiate the 1968 Race Relations Act. As for the Netherlands, the instrumental input of policy advice in the 1980s was clearly also mobilised by the (relatively weak) Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work to legitimise its authority (*vis-à-vis* rival ministries) over minorities policy (Scholten 2011). In the 1990s, academic research was increasingly used to substantiate pre-existing political preferences. Finally, in Italy the technocratic experiments under centre-left governments were effectively undone by the election of centre-right coalitions shortly afterwards (Zincone 2011).

Given these divergent patterns of knowledge use prior to the 'crisis' of migrant integration, it is interesting to ask what led to the 'assimilationist turn' in all three countries after 2000. Were similar policy responses the outcome of similar knowledge utilisation processes? Did the crisis represent a window of opportunity for the instrumental use of policy-oriented research, or did it instead spur more symbolic forms of knowledge utilisation? In the following section we reconstruct patterns of knowledge utilisation after 2000 in our three country cases.

4.1 The case of the United Kingdom

Up until the late 1990s, integration policy in the UK was marked by "a great deal of continuity" over time (Bleich 2011: 59-60). The dominant policy frame which resulted has been characterised as 'multicultural race relations' (Favell 1998). Pioneering legislation was drafted in the 1960s and 1970s with the aim of reducing discrimination on racial grounds. Legal acknowledgement of *indirect* discrimination against *racial groups* opened the door to the recognition of minority group rights by policymakers, culminating in multiculturalist policies which were primarily driven and implemented at the level of local government.

However, the dominance of this frame came to be severely challenged during and after 2001. Major riots involving youths of South Asian Muslim heritage in three northern English

mill towns (Bradford, Burnley and Oldham) in the summer of 2001 triggered a crisis in multicultural race relations policy. Shortly afterwards, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States crystallised the public perception of Muslims as a community experiencing particular integration difficulties. The backlash against multiculturalism in response to these events, not only from right-wing politicians and media but also from left-wing opinion makers (Alibhai-Brown 2001), prompted senior politicians to hastily distance themselves from the old policies, leading to a reorientation of integration policy. Rather than celebrating diversity, policy initiatives began to emphasise activities and values shared in common, under the heading of ‘community cohesion’.

According to one observer at a prominent think-tank, the ‘mill town riots’ took policymakers by surprise: “they hadn't expected them: they came – for them – out of nowhere, and they panicked.”² In response, policymakers turned to a group of expert stakeholders to generate new ideas for integration policy. The Community Cohesion Review Team (CCRT), under the chairmanship of Ted Cante (formerly chief executive of Nottingham City Council), was tasked by the Home Office to “identify good practice, key policy issues and new and innovative thinking in the field of community cohesion” (Home Office 2001: 5).

In the aftermath of the riots, the term ‘community cohesion’ constituted a new notion which hitherto had not featured in policy or academic debates. First appearing in the title of the interdepartmental Ministerial Group set up immediately after the period of rioting³, the term was elaborated in briefing papers prepared for the Review Team by Home Office policy advisers.⁴ These briefings drew on the distinction between bridging and bonding forms of social capital formulated by the prominent American political scientist Robert Putnam (Putnam 2000). More generally, communitarian ideas were coming into vogue in public policy debates at the time and were translated into the CCRT’s recommendations. The Cante Report highlighted two key factors contributing to the riots: firstly a lack of shared values between minority and majority groups in the affected communities, and secondly a normative preference for residential self-segregation among South Asian groups. Thus, the CCRT attributed the causes of the riots to socio-cultural factors. This was in contrast to other experts, who looked to socio-economic inequalities for an explanation (Robinson 2008). Following the publication of Cante’s report, however, the empirical basis for its claims pertaining to residential segregation were robustly challenged by a number of demographers and

² Interview with a consultant (and former think-tank researcher), 8 February 2012.

³ Ministerial Working Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion.

⁴ Interview with a CCRT member, 10 January 2013.

quantitative geographers (Simpson 2004). These scholars attempted to influence the policy agenda via public engagement through newspapers, radio and television. However, as long as they remained out of favour with policymakers their influence was unlikely to be direct.

Although the CCRT drew on academic knowledge and concepts in the writing of their report, only one of the 13 experts on the review team had an academic background. Instead, a wide range of expert stakeholders were represented, from voluntary organisations, local government, consultancy, and trades unions. Home Office officials also sat on the CCRT. Interestingly, after 2001, Cante successfully made the transition from local government to academia as a professor at the Institute of Community Cohesion, a collaborative venture uniting the universities of Coventry, De Montfort, Leicester and Warwick. Since 2005, this centre has been highly influential in pushing community cohesion as a policy frame, and Cante now enjoys a reputation as a leading authority on this topic.

In sum, the CCRT's *modus operandi* implied cooperation and role convergence among a wide range of actors in the knowledge utilisation process rather than the conventional 'two worlds hypothesis' based on a strict demarcation between experts and policymakers (Hoppe, 2005). By instigating the CCRT and limiting its focus to cohesion issues, policymakers were very much 'on top' in their dialogues with experts. In terms of boundary configurations, therefore, the 'engineering' model prevailed (Hoppe 2005). Indeed the high level of government influence over the commission – seen in the selection of a 'safe pair of hands' as chair⁵, the narrow terms of reference, and the short time in which commissioners had to report – points to the conclusion that the CCRT was set up by policymakers to substantiate the new paradigm of community cohesion. However, a number of detailed policy recommendations which had not been pre-determined by policymakers were subsequently accepted and implemented. These included a revised naturalisation regime, with a new focus on acquiring better knowledge of English language and British institutions, and 'school-twinning' programmes to encourage contacts between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. Thus we conclude that the CCRT combined features of the substantiating function of knowledge use (Boswell 2009) together with instrumental first- and second-order policy learning (Hall 1993).

4.2 The case of The Netherlands

⁵ Interview with CCRT member, 10 January 2013.

In the Netherlands of the 1980s, the Minorities Policy framed multiculturalism as something to strive for. The Citizenship Policy of the 1990s still accepted multicultural society as a given and it upheld the government's special responsibility for some minority groups (Scholten 2011). However, in 2000 a high-profile intervention in a quality broadsheet newspaper by Paul Scheffer, a prominent member of the Social Democratic party, dispelled this notion. In his page-long essay "The multicultural drama" (*Het multiculturele drama*), this former staff member of the party's scientific foundation argued that migrant integration policy was now failing just as the Dutch policy of neutrality on the eve of the Second World War had failed. In doing so, Paul Scheffer made criticisms of multiculturalism and minority cultures accessible and acceptable to left-leaning as well as right-wing governmental elites (Uitermark 2010: 69). In mainstream politics, the sea-change occurred after the attacks of 9/11, the rise of populist politician Pim Fortuyn, and his murder on 6 May 2002 shortly before national elections. After that the debate focused in particular on the perceived "Islamisation" of Dutch culture (Fortuyn 1997) and how it should be countered (Uitermark 2005: 40).

As the issue became salient politically, the Dutch research landscape on migrant integration started to grow immensely.⁶ However, Paul Scheffer's analysis was regarded by some as scientifically flawed, in particular by those scholars who believed his "culturological reflections" insufficiently recognized the socio-economic aspects of migrant integration (Engbersen 2009).

In late 2002, Parliament established a special investigative Committee on migrant integration (*Commissie Blok*) in response to a call for such an initiative by Paul Scheffer and others (Uitermark 2005). Originally, the 6 MPs on the Blok Committee were tasked to investigate "why the integration policy had been so minimally successful" (parliamentary motion, paraphrased in Scholten 2011: 206). Later, the terms of reference were formulated more openly, but the core responsibility of the Committee remained to "provide building blocks for the integration policy to come" (official assignment, cited in Scholten 2011: 207). The Blok Committee argued that migrant integration policies should focus, like before, on the domains of work, education, and housing rather than cultural aspects like religion, concluding somewhat surprisingly that the integration of migrants into Dutch society thus defined was more successful than generally believed. This conclusion was mainly based on a major comprehensive review of the scientific literature (Rijkschroeff *et al.* 2003) commissioned to a private research organisation, the Verwey-Jonker Institute (VWJ).

⁶ All Dutch experts interviewed for this project agreed on this.

These conclusions were at odds with the prevailing political mood and rejected by most political parties and the government. In the media, various prominent intellectuals also discredited them as “naive” (cited in Scholten 2011: 211). In fact, the VWJ evaluators and the Blok Committee itself became objects of fierce controversy even before the findings were published (Scholten 2011: 210-212). The consulted experts were accused of multicultural bias and were alleged to have contributed to the ‘failed’ policies of the past. One of the parliamentarians in the Committee was criticised for evaluating a migrant integration policy for which she had been partly responsible in the past as State Secretary for Education (ibid.). Another parliamentarian decided to leave the Committee in protest. Political opponents effectively damaged the scientific status of the literature study and its authors in the media as well.⁷

In the meantime, the national government had given new impetus to its already quite extensive infrastructure for ethnic monitoring (Guiraudon et al. 2005). This part of the knowledge utilisation process in response to the ‘crisis’, as Scholten (2011: 214) argued, “involved the engineering of a new assimilationist approach to immigrant integration driven primarily by political developments in this period, making selective use of scientific research that could contribute directly to the framing of such an approach.” The government essentially put socio-cultural integration on the agenda of governmental research organisations like CBS (Statistics Netherlands), SCP (The Netherlands Institute for Social Research), and WODC (Scientific Research and Documentation Centre) (ibid.).

It is noteworthy that many scientists based at Dutch universities take on outright political roles and also strategically use the media. Even after being appointed professor at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), for example, Paul Scheffer did not define himself as a “scientist”, but as a “public intellectual”, motivated by “critical loyalty” to the Netherlands (Paul Scheffer, cited in Uitermark 2005). Some researchers promoting an alternative socio-economic framing of the migrant integration debate also consciously opted for the ‘voice model’ by entering the arena of public debate (for example Engbersen 2009: 227). Irrespective of their impact on policy, it seems that their participation in the knowledge utilisation process in any case has a legitimising function, i.e. their participation is geared towards achieving or reproducing their status as migrant integration experts. In a more indirect way, the reliance of most migrant integration research on official ethnic data in the

⁷ Interview with professor emeritus, recently retired, December 2011.

Netherlands contributes to the continuous substantiation of “the ethnic lens”, which sees socio-cultural explanations for every societal problem (Ham and Van der Meer 2012).

On November 2, 2004, the well-known Dutch filmmaker and ‘Islam-critic’ Theo van Gogh was murdered by a radical Muslim with a Moroccan background. Amidst unprecedented media attention (SOM Project 2012), “[c]ritics framed the murder of Van Gogh as the ‘exemplary case’ that showed that the Dutch policies and attitudes towards migrants had been too soft; too naïve. (...) [It] had proven, once and for all, that multiculturalism was a ‘dead end street’” (Hajer and Uitermark 2008: 5-6). In response to this national focusing event, Dutch policymakers intensified their efforts to force immigrants to adapt themselves to the cultural norms framed as fundamental to the Dutch majority culture. Ever since, the large-N panel data on the socio-cultural ‘distance’ between ‘non-Western’ ethnic groups and the ‘Western’ native population provided by the governmental research organisations has been used to substantiate a wide range of assimilationist measures. Dissonant voices such as the plea by SCP researchers to intensify rather than abolish Dutch employment equity legislation are commonly ignored (Dagevos and Trappenburg 2003). In the context of the migrant integration ‘crisis’, the national government clearly is a “selective shopper”⁸, even with respect to the work of its most valued experts.

4.3 The case of Italy

In the late 1990s the involvement of academic experts in the process of drafting the first comprehensive law on immigration in Italy led to the emergence of the so-called “reasonable integration model” (Zincone 2011). In more concrete terms, socio-economic integration was privileged, as indicated by the main legal provisions as well as by the two reports of the Commission for the Integration of Immigrants compiled respectively in 2000 and 2001, which assigned primacy to research on indicators of immigrants’ socio-economic integration.

After 2001, this emerging definition was to be challenged by a new discourse denouncing immigrants’ cultural difference and lack of respect for Italian Christian values. At the beginning, such a view essentially reflected the political rhetoric of the Lega Nord (Guolo 2003), but other voices were added after the dramatic events of 9/11. Conservative bishops and distinguished intellectuals like Giovanni Sartori, political scientist at Columbia

⁸ Similar phrase used by a governmental policy advisor on migrant integration issues, interviewed in December 2011, and a senior researcher in a governmental research organisation, interviewed in February 2012. See Penninx 2005: 44.

University, and Oriana Fallaci, journalist and writer, denounced the weakness of Italian liberal values *vis-à-vis* Islamic fundamentalism.

This opposition towards multiculturalism and Islam characterised the decade, following the bombings in Madrid (March 2004) and London (July 2005). However, a national focusing event proved crucial: in August 2006 the Union of Islamic Communities in Italy (UCOII⁹) published an advertisement in the main newspapers comparing Israeli repression in the Palestinian territories to the Nazi Holocaust. The protests of the Union of Hebrew Communities were echoed by the Lega Nord and centre-right MPs, who launched warnings against the potential incompatibility of Islam with democratic values. This led to a realignment of centre-left parties, from the ‘reasonable integration’ model towards an increasing stress on the centrality of the principles and values of the Italian Constitution. Hence, in the mid 2000s, a consensus emerged across the major political parties about the risk of a ‘migrant integration crisis’ in Italy.

To cool down the protests and avoid further politicisation, the then Interior Minister of the second (centre-left) Prodi government, Giuliano Amato, announced his intention to appoint a Scientific Committee with the task of drafting a Charter of the Values of Citizenship and Integration.¹⁰ The biographies of the appointed experts indicate a prevalence of juridical competence on church-state relations, canonic and Islamic law (3 out of 5 appointed experts), and, to a lesser extent, sociological and anthropological competence on Islam (2 experts). The Committee undertook studies on matters deemed of particular relevance such as civic integration programmes in Europe, but also collected substantive knowledge from the ground, through extensive consultations with the main immigrant and religious communities and with NGOs working on immigrant integration.

Through the appointment of the Scientific Committee an engineering-like structure of research-policy relations emerged (Hoppe 2005), since experts were called upon to accomplish a specific task established by the political leadership, i.e. the drafting of the Charter, in a principle/agent type of relation. Furthermore, the Committee worked always in partnership with the Interior Minister: two officers of the Ministry were appointed as

⁹ UCOII is a confederation gathering together some 104 local Muslim associations and is considered as rather extremist in the panorama of Italian Islamic organisations.

¹⁰ See the main Italian newspapers: *Aut-aut di Amato all’Ucoii - “Firmate una carta dei valori”*, 25th August 2006, *La Repubblica*, Carmelo Lopapa; *«Incontrarci? Prima la carta dei valori»*, 29th August 2006, *Corriere della Sera*, Paolo Conti.

permanent members and Minister Amato himself took part in various meetings. A certain convergence of roles between policymakers and experts thus stands out.

The main outcome of this process consisted in the official adoption of the Charter of the Values of Citizenship and Integration as a benchmark for the Interior Ministry general administration in its relations with immigrant and religious communities, and as a statement of commitments to be undersigned by individual immigrants applying for naturalisation. Hence, the Scientific Committee played a substantiating function (Boswell 2009), since experts were called upon to give scientific contents to the ‘cultural turn’ in the definition of immigrants’ integration promoted by Minister Amato. The Committee also had a more general function of downplaying radicalisation on Islam and establishing a new political consensus on the definition of Italian citizenship as an individual path requiring adherence to the cultural and civic values established by the Charter.

The new culturalist approach of the Interior Minister is also clearly underlined by the background of the experts mobilised in the Scientific Committee: whereas the Commission for the Integration of Immigrants of 1999 was composed primarily of sociologists and demographers interested in empirical research, legal scholars concerned with normative issues predominated in the Scientific Committee. Appointing as chair of the Scientific Committee a well known professor of Canon Law, who had been engaged during the 1980s as a consultant for the then Socialist government on matters of relations with the Catholic Church, enhanced the link between immigrant integration and civic and religious values. The same expert authored a study for the Italian Senate on the display of the crucifix in schools and other public offices.¹¹

Parallel to this prevailing cultural definition of migrant integration, the National Committee for Economic and Labour Affairs (CNEL)¹² continued throughout the decade to promote studies on the socio-economic conditions of immigrants in Italy on the basis of contracts delivered to universities and other independent institutes. This was an attempt to propose - unsuccessfully - an alternative framing of migrant integration.¹³ At the same time, knowledge has been used by CNEL to legitimise its role in policymaking processes as an independent institution, which provides policy advice on the basis of strictly scientific evidence.

¹¹ Interview with an academic member of the Scientific Committee, 12th November 2011.

¹² CNEL is an institution established by the Italian Constitution (art. 99) with the task of providing consultancy to the Parliament and the Government on economic and labour market issues.

¹³ Interview with CNEL expert on migration, 15th January 2012.

5. Comparative Discussion

In light of the differences in patterns of knowledge utilisation in our case countries before the 2000s the analysis of the post-'crisis' situation carried out above illuminates some striking similarities. In all three countries, policymakers turned to experts for advice following the 'crisis'. However, in contrast to assumptions of instrumental knowledge use at times of crisis, we find that policy-oriented research seems to have been used in primarily symbolic ways, i.e. to substantiate policymakers' pre-ordained preferences or to legitimise an expert's role and status.

As regards knowledge utilisation processes, it is apparent that the narrow definition of the problem limited the set of experts to whom government turned for advice following the 'crisis'. Academics and independent experts associated with socio-economic schools of thought tended to be marginalised. By contrast, other sources and types of knowledge were prioritised by policymakers, primarily those who viewed integration as a socio-cultural issue. As for the respective roles of scientists and policymakers and their interactions, it is interesting that in each country an *ad hoc* committee was set up in the aftermath of the 'crisis'. In all cases the configuration of the boundaries between science and policy were clearly based on the 'engineering' model (Hoppe 2005): policymakers had primacy insofar as they initiated these committees and a role convergence of scientists, policymakers and other actors is evident. Indeed, a striking feature of the British and Dutch cases goes beyond role convergence to encompass 'role swap', when prominent participants with backgrounds in politics or policymaking embarked on new careers in academia. These developments challenge the assumption of separateness between knowledge producers and knowledge users, indicating that "convergent logics" are at work (Hoppe 2005: 208).

As regards knowledge utilisation outcomes, it is clear from the case studies that policymakers turned to experts for advice before making the "assimilationist turn" (Joppke and Morawska 2003). In Britain and Italy a number of selected experts, together with a variety of other actors, gave content and form to this policy shift. Those academics marginalised or excluded from this process attempted to 'enlighten' and influence public discourse via media engagement or the promotion of independent studies (see the case of CNEL in Italy), generally with less success. In the Netherlands, the Blok Committee could in theory have led to a socio-economic reframing of the migrant integration issue, but such 'third order learning' (Hall 1993) was clearly at odds with the prevailing political agenda. Hence we

conclude that the overall direction of travel had already been set by policymakers, thanks to the way the crisis was framed initially.

However, our case studies also show how the use of policy-oriented research in times of crisis and on such a contested issue as migrant integration is a complex social process that can have different outcomes for the various categories of participants. On the one hand, while policymakers were able to substantiate their pre-existing political preferences, it is too simple to suggest that politicians did not learn anything at all: expert knowledge played a role in drafting concrete policies and developing a fully-fledged policy frame. In the terms of Hall (1993), experts did provide first and second order information and policymakers learned how to translate their broad political preferences into concrete instruments. The knowledge utilisation process thus had a limited instrumental function. On the other hand, we find that policy analysts sought to become active participants in the knowledge utilisation process with their own symbolic interests, such as promoting their status as legitimate experts and/or substantiating their own pre-existing policy preferences. To put it differently: “a policy analyst is part of the scene and the scene dictates his part” (respondent cited in Van Nispen 1993).

Finally, we find that knowledge and expertise are produced and actively constructed and deconstructed in the knowledge utilisation process itself (Rip 2003, Bekkers et al. 2004). (De)constructing expertise – a concept in which the verb precedes the noun – emerges as a crucial pattern of knowledge utilisation at times of ‘crisis’: it underlines the social nature of processes of knowledge utilisation, whereby the knowledge that is potentially utilised is not ‘out there waiting’, but actively and constantly under construction in the process itself and an object of on-going contestation. Many different actors - policymakers, experts, but also the media - are likely to be involved in the process, showing (partly) converging roles irrespective of their labels. As observed in our case studies, such role convergence stems from actors’ common interest in increasing the ‘epistemic authority’ (Herbst 2003 in Boswell 2009) of some knowledge claims and claimants while decreasing the authority of other claims and claimants.

6. Conclusions

Before the 2000s, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Italy not only had different ways of perceiving migrant integration issues and different policies, but they also exemplified quite different patterns of knowledge utilisation. This study reveals how, after shared perceptions of

‘crisis’ vis-à-vis integration emerged across the three countries, similar processes of conflict-ridden competition between different knowledge claims and different experts took place as well.

In all three cases the prevalence of a socio-culturalist framing of immigrant integration clearly contributed to the selection of certain types of knowledge and experts, while marginalising alternatives. Our analysis also highlights a convergence of roles between policymakers and scientific experts: experts selected by politicians to take part in scientific commissions actively contributed to the building of the new socio-cultural approach to integration. When this did not happen open conflict between experts and policymakers arose. We introduced the notion of ‘(de)constructing expertise’ to capture the core element of conflict as well as the social nature of these patterns of knowledge utilisation (multi-actor, relatively unstructured).

That said, some limitations of our study should be acknowledged, for example the limited number of cases and the fact that our observations take into consideration only a specific crisis, i.e. the migrant integration crisis. Furthermore, our focus is on describing and comparing knowledge utilisation processes and outcomes rather than analysing them in causal terms. Our empirical material gives only approximate measurements of the motivations and intentions of the participants in the knowledge utilisation processes, i.e. the reasons for their behaviour at the time. More detailed analyses per case study will be necessary to establish to what extent the knowledge utilisation outcomes were (also) brought about by other factors. However, by moving beyond ‘grab-bag’ (Rich 1997) descriptions of non-instrumental knowledge utilisation from the outset, we hope to have contributed a more complete understanding of the complexities involved in knowledge utilisation.

As regards generalisability to other issue domains, one important finding is that even in an extremely politicised domain such as migrant integration policymakers are keen on sustaining “the myth of instrumental use” (Boswell 2009: 249). The patterns we observe are not at all ‘fact-free politics’. Rather they may be more accurately called ‘value-shackled politics’, because facts still matter a lot, even in the migrant integration issue domain - or at least selecting facts and defining them from a certain perspective. This greatly enhances the potential value of the notion of (de)constructing expertise for other domains, especially if also in these domains multiple types of actors aim at participating in knowledge utilisation processes.

In fact, by questioning the 'two worlds metaphor' underlying most literature on knowledge utilisation, our findings suggest important implications for future research. A first issue worth further investigation is how knowledge utilisation processes in one issue domain may lead to improved legitimacy of actors in other domains. In the case of the migrant integration 'crisis', politicians' main interest in initiating a knowledge utilisation process and participating in it may not necessarily be to improve policy output (the strictly instrumental function) or to substantiate a pre-existing political preference. Their main concern may rather be to gain leverage ('political capital') in other domains like macro-economic or social policy. In a similar vein, by taking part in migrant integration policymaking, experts might pursue a broader strategy of strengthening the relevance of their discipline or simply their personal status as experts. A crisis can open a window of opportunity in this direction. Going one step further, future research could also focus on the role of experts in the construction of the crisis itself. What is striking, in any case, is how seemingly quite dissimilar national focusing events (rioting, a political assassination, a newspaper advert) led to very similar conclusions: the (perceived) failure of multiculturalism.

Finally, the notion of (de)constructing expertise also suggests important implications for policy analysts as practitioners. Our findings point to the possible role that policy analysis can play at times of crisis by engaging in processes of 'critical frame reflection' (Schön and Rein 1994), i.e. in problematising policy frames and favouring a critical debate on their underlying assumptions. Our case studies suggest, however, that this is likely to be an obstacle course, especially when politicisation is increasing.

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Table 1. Patterns of knowledge use prior to the migrant integration ‘crisis’

	UK	Netherlands	Italy
Knowledge Utilisation Processes	Engineering model: role convergence, primacy with politics	Technocratic model (especially 1970s-80s): role convergence, scientific primacy	Very little knowledge utilisation whatsoever
Knowledge Utilisation Outcomes	Indirect instrumental outcomes (‘knowledge creep’); some substantiating	Direct instrumental and legitimising outcomes; later substantiating	