PACES

**Making migration and migration policy decisions
amidst societal transformations**

The PACES Project: Glossary

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PACES (Making migration and migration policy decisions amidst societal transformation) is a 40-month research project (2023-2026) that examines decisions to stay and migrate over time and space, researches the politics of knowledge in migration policy and seeks to use its insights to inform future migration policies and governance. PACES is carried out by a consortium of 14 partners in Europe and Africa.

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History of changes

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Introduction

This glossary provides a common starting point and guide for scholars working on migration and migration policy decision-making within the PACES project. It includes concepts that are central to the research question of the PACES project as well as for the empirical operationalization of the planned research, based on state-of-the-art literature. Thus, this document aims to create transparency for the multiple partners working on the different but related parts of the project. Some terms provide guidance on potentially problematic usages of terms and partners should reflect upon how they adopt said terms.

The terms are presented in two separate sections: the first on migration decision-making, which contains 20 concepts, and the second on migration policy decision-making, which includes 26 concepts. Terms that are cross-referenced within each section are in bold. Moreover, the terms found in this glossary are in bold the first time they appear in the two conceptual frameworks: Researching decisions to stay and migrate: A Temporal Multilevel Analysis framework and, Researching the politics of knowledge in migration policy.[1]

Within PACES, we believe that critically assessing tensions and trade-offs between concepts and the actors who use them is productive to advance broader conceptual reflections within migration studies. In this vein, the glossary will be revisited at the end of the project to integrate how PACES' research insights might challenge, refine or nuance currently dominant understandings. This redefinition at the end of the project might also entail bringing these concepts in dialogue with terminology and definitions used by our research participants.

Migration decision-making

Aspirations, life and migration

This concept can refer to life aspirations or to migration aspirations. Life aspirations capture the desire to achieve a specific objective, which gives great meaning and motivation to a person. Life aspirations may include obtaining a specific degree, developing a particular career, forming a family, becoming a community leader and exploring the world. Migration aspirations refer to the specific desire, preference or intention to migrate (Carling & Schewel, 2018). Because migration aspirations may be limited to dreams and wishes of migration, they are not sufficient for actual migration to take place. The lack of capabilities is one of conditions that may prevent the realization of migration aspirations. However, even when a person has the ability to migrate, she may not proceed to gather information, plan and turn migration aspiration into actual migration. That may be due to changes in societal and personal circumstances and possibly changed life aspirations. Because the PACES project seeks to understand people's decisions to stay or migrate, first and foremost we seek to understand life aspirations as a backdrop to whether migration aspirations are part of people's plans.

Drivers of migration, also refers to determinants and root causes

Migration drivers are factors or forces that influence the inception and the continuation of migration. They are part of the economic, social, political, cultural and environmental context in places of origin, along the migration journey and at destination. In their elaboration, Van Hear, Bakewell, and Long (2018) proposed that drivers of migration could be framed in driver complexes, or configurations, which explain the mechanisms underpinning specific times of migration and patterns. Although the term *determinants* of migration has been commonly used

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[1] Available at Publications – IMI (migrationinstitute.org) and www.iss.nl/PACES.

in migration research, such research often seeks causal explanations underpinning migration patterns (Czaika and Reinprecht 2022). Migration research also focuses on the *root causes* of migration, which Carling and Talleraas (2016) have argued reveal a narrower understanding of migration as directly caused by generally negative conditions in origin areas such as poverty and violent conflict. In the PACES project, we use the term migration drivers as we seek to understand how various drivers come together to influence decision-making, an approach also taken in the **social transformation framework**.

Expectations

Expectations are generally described as the belief that something will happen or should happen in the future. The term expectations has been used frequently in migration research, from Harris and Todaro (1970) who suggested that rural-urban migration was associated to the expectations of obtaining urban employment, to Mabogunje (1970: 11) who referred to expectations as a crucial element to understanding rural-urban migration. Expectations may be positive or negative, with repercussions on migration behavior. For instance, an analysis of Gallup data suggested that those who expected worsening economic conditions and had more pessimistic view of future prospects had higher migration intentions to move abroad than those with better expectations (Migali and Scipioni 2018). In the PACES project, we consider two types of expectations: (i) societal expectations: what a person expects to happen in society, with no specific relation to what the person wants; and (ii) personal expectations: what a person expects will take place in relation to his life, including the expectation of attaining valued goals (De Jong and Fawcett 1981). We seek to analyze how future expectations of society and personal lives influence people's decisions to stay or migrate.

Good life

The notion of a 'good life' has gained some importance among migration researcher who have considered this notion from different perspectives. Chindarkar (2014) referred to the subjectivity of the meaning of a good life and suggested that this meaning may differ according to education levels. Nevertheless, images of a good life are transmitted from rural to urban areas and around the world through the exchange of information via media and a variety of communication channels which raise awareness of goods, services and diverse lifestyles (Mabogunje 1970; Schapendonk 2012). In the last decades, images of the good life have been shaped by the neoliberal framework, which defines a good life as a life that must be earned through hard work and merit as individuals work against the uncertainties of market forces (Kleist and Jansen 2016). Yet, resistance to models of a good life is also visible. Mah (2009) showed how in Niagara Falls (USA), despite the economic hardships in the community, people felt they had a good life because of their social relations with their family, church and community. Understanding the presence of models of a good life, its subjective meanings and the aspects that make a good life for people in different societies are central to the research in the PACES project.

Hope

Hope is associated with the desire for something to happen or the belief that something will happen in the future. Hope is based on imagining a future desirable outcome amid uncertainty. Hope is often associated with the possibility of change and for a better future and is central in decisions to migrate and to stay (Pine 2014). The lack of hope for a better future locally may underpin decisions to leave (Bal and Willems 2014), while the hope to find employment in the national public sector may give rise to preferences to stay among young people, as observed in the Middle East and North Africa (Ramos 2019) and in Brazil (Vezzoli 2023). Concurrently the hope that opportunities will be available in another place, e.g., in European destination, gives aspiring migrants the opportunity to imagine a new life through migration. And along the migration journey, hope may die out in one area and be reborn in new forms as observed among migrants on the move who, after disappointing outcomes, hope on better opportunities in yet other destinations (Vigh 2009). Because hope is a driving force in life and **migration decisions**, in the PACES project we seek to understand the hopes of residents and (potential) migrants and their role in decisions to stay and migrate.

Life course approach

The life course approach captures the phases and experiences associated with the unfolding of life. Life course events, which include completing school, entering the labor market, marriage and childbirth, and the end of a partnership, often require a physical move. The life course approach also considers that contextual conditions of specific locations and historical periods shape the life course experiences differently (Halfacree and Boyle 1993). Thus, adolescence has its specific characteristics, but its experiences are bound to be distinct depending on the time in history – in 2024, 1980 or 1950 – and location – in the Netherlands, Italy or Nigeria. Moreover, phases in the life course intersect with other characteristics such as gender, class, ethnicity, (dis)ability, religion, and sexuality among others, shaping a multitude of pathways. Hence, the expansion of education will be experienced differently by the youth, their parents and retired people. Similarly, an economic downturn will be experienced differently by those about the enter the labor force or with precarious positions and those with secure work. These intersectional positions that merge the life phase with personal characteristics influence how people perceive their life in relation to their community, with the potential of affecting **migration decisions**.

Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction has been described as "a cognitive-evaluative sense of satisfaction with life" (Chindarkar 2014: 160). It has been defined as capturing "individual tastes, preferences, self-evaluation of own life quality" and representing an individual's experienced utility of life from present and past experiences (Otrachshenko and Popova 2014). While life satisfaction may be used interchangeably with the terms 'subjective well-being' and 'happiness' (see Ivlevs 2015: 335), stressing the subjectivity of this term, life satisfaction has been seen as a measurable proxy of how macro-level factors affect individuals and, in turn, they affect **migration decisions** (Otrachshenko and Popova 2014). Hence, life satisfaction has been used to test how levels of education influence life satisfaction and how those, along with income differentials, are related to driving international migration decisions (Chindarkar 2014). However, empirical findings are ambiguous. While Otrachshenko and Popova (2014) find that life satisfaction is a strong predictor of individual migration decisions, other studies find that the greatest intentions to move abroad are reported by people who are the most and the least satisfied with their lives (Ivlevs 2015: 336). While in PACES we are not asking direct questions about life satisfaction, we ask participants to evaluate their community and its services, and their **values** and ambitions. Thus, rather than using life satisfaction as a proxy to assess participants' self-evaluation of the macroeconomic, political and educational factors, in PACES we seek to evaluate the participants' satisfaction with various aspects of the community and relate it to their personal ambitions and their preferences to stay or migrate.

Migration decision

The notion of migration decisions stems from the general notion of decision, which is a choice made about something after considering options or alternatives (McFall 2015). Thus, a migration decision is the result of the choice to migrate when other options, i.e., to stay, are available. In migration, certain circumstances may not give people ample options of whether to stay or migrate. However, even in situations of violent conflict, individuals make decisions on whether to migrate, how, where to and with whom to do so. Regardless of the circumstances, the decision to migrate may not necessarily result in actual migration. That is because migration decisions involve a few steps that, while not completely separate, mark different steps that involve the emergence of migration aspirations, the formation of migration intentions, the planning and preparation and finally actual migration (Figure 1). Research found that migration aspirations may easily fade (Kley 2017), intentions signal a stronger consideration, while the preparation phase entails active planning (Migali and Scipioni 2019). That said, the decision to migrate may be revisited at any of these steps, even right before actual migration takes place (Hoppe and Fujishiro 2015). Such changes may be associated to the fact that migration decisions are socially embedded and comparative in nature, so that changes in societal and personal circumstances may create alternatives, making migration more or less desirable and inducing a shift in the course of action.
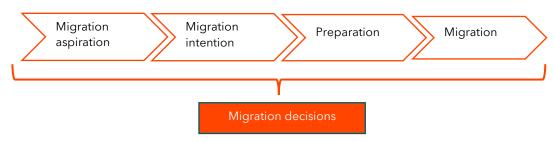
Figure 1. Phases of the migration decision-making process

Migration decision-making

Building on the notion of **migration decision**, migration decision-making stems from the general process of decision making, which can be defined as "the internal processes by which a course of action or inaction is chosen from a set of two or more alternatives, but may or may not result in behavior" (McFall 2015: 47). Migration decision-making is a dynamic process that starts with the emergence of a desire to migrate (**aspiration**), may evolve into the development of intentions, followed by a planning phase and actual migration (leaving one's community), and continues thereafter as decisions to stay or migrate recur over **time** and in different locations if migration took place. Although it has been argued that the decision to migrate and where and how to migrate are part of the same process (Halfacree and Boyle 1993), some research has disentangled migration decision-making into sub-processes that include decisions on when, how, with whom and how long to migrate, which may take place in different moments. An important aspect of migration decision-making is who makes the decision as research has shown that the decision to migrate may be taken by individuals, families or may be determined by external forces (Czaika, Bijak, and Prike 2021). In PACES, we study decisions to stay or migrate from a multi-level perspective as we seek to include contextual and life-course factors, and cognitive and behavioral processes that may influence these decisions.

Migration decision-making processes/mechanisms and models

The processes or mechanisms of migration decision-making are generally conceptualized as models that encompass both the factors and the steps that lead to migration **aspirations** or to actual migration, as well as feedback mechanisms at various stages of the process. Among the most known models to explain the **migration decision-making process** we find the value-expectancy model (De Jong and Fawcett 1981), models based on the theory of planned behavior (Kley 2011; Hoppe and Fujishiro 2015) and on prospect theory (Czaika 2015; Clark and Lisowski 2017). Moreover, as research on migration decision-making processes advances, scholars have started to focus on specific aspects of the process, studying specifically how potential migrants move across the various stages of **migration decisions** (Kley 2011, 2017; Kley and Mulder 2010; Aslany et al. 2021; Caso, Hagen-Zanker, and Vargas-Silva 2023; de Haas 2021; Carling and Schewel 2018). For a thorough review of and elaboration of the existing models and approaches, see the PACES conceptual framework on **migration decision-making** (Vezzoli, Kurekova, and Schewel 2024).

Migration policy

Non-migration policy

In very general terms, policy can be understood as a way of formalising or standardising responses to particular issues or problems. We define policies as a set of laws, regulations, procedures, or administrative actions of governments and other public institutions, adapted at the national or supra-national level. Non-migration

policies are policies not originally designed to manage migration and affect **migration decisions**, but which nevertheless influence people's decisions about mobility, their behaviour and the outcomes of migration. Their impact can be direct, that is targeting the individual, or indirect, by changing the broader environment in which individuals make decisions about mobility.

Perceptions

Perceptions are defined as personal observations and evaluations of one's personal and contextual conditions. Unlike cognition, which is the mental process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience and the senses, perception is the ability to see, hear or become aware of something through the senses. Thus, factors and processes that seem objective are perceived and interpreted by individuals based on their personal experiences. The importance of perceptions in migration has been noted in migration research for a long time. Already in 1966, Lee (1966) indicated that "[…] it is not so much the actual factors at origin and destination as the perception of these factors which results in migration" (51). For example, an economic downturn may be barely perceived by someone whose work is in a sector that is not affected by the downturn, but it would be strongly felt by someone who has lost their job, possibly engendering their migration **aspirations**. Perceptions could also lead someone to recognize a country as progressive, with significant negative effects on intentions to migrate abroad (Chindarkar, 2014). In PACES, perception is used interchangeably with the term interpretation, because both terms refer to the opinion that emerges from observing and explaining what happens in people's personal and contextual environment.

Relative deprivation and relative endowment

In migration research, the term relative deprivation was first used as part of the New Economics of Labor Migration approach (Stark and Taylor 1991; Stark and Yitzhaki 1988). Since then, it has been widely used to express how individuals compare themselves to others – a reference group –, and may develop a feeling of being 'worse off' while also feeling that they have a right to those same living conditions. The feeling of relative deprivation has been found to engender migration **aspirations**, particularly when people who are thought to be 'better off' have acquired this position through migration and remittances. Research has also shown how individuals may also feel relative endowment when they feel that they are 'better off' than others, including migrants who may have acquired more financial stability but may have lost other valuable things, e.g., closeness to family and friends, feeling of belonging to the community, proximity to nature. The concepts of relative deprivation and endowment bring to the forefront the comparative elements of decision-making and encourage us to pay attention to the multiple references groups that may influence these feelings. Reference groups may be located in the same place as the individual making comparisons, but may also be in other locations, e.g., friends who migrated, and they may also refer to people in the past, e.g., family members who lived elsewhere. In PACES, we pay close attention to how people compare to people and places in the past, present and into the future.

Social norms

Social norms are part of shared **expectations** about how members of the group should handle social situations (Bicchieri, Muldoon, and Sontuose 2018). Social norms, which may be also known as normative beliefs, may be more or less internalized, may be shaped by various sources of influence in society, and are therefore specific to each society and culture (Pepitone and Triandis 1987). Thus, while some members of society may have a strong commitment to honesty, others may be less committed to it. It is then essential to understand people's normative system and how it guides their behavior. In migration, social norms have been explored particularly in relation to gender norms, the family sphere, the culture of migration and how information about potential destination countries may shape the choice of destinations (De Jong 2000; Schewel 2022; Neubauer 2022; Hagen-Zanker and Mallett 2020). Overall, research has shown that social norms are very influential in shaping migration in a way that defeat conventional rational thinking. We observe this when there is strong societal pressure to migrate even if migration may not seem the most advantageous option. Social norms are also relevant to understand the influence of migration policies. **Migration policies** may in fact seek to stimulate

staying put, while a culture of migration encourages young people to embark on an adventure and try their luck elsewhere. What happens when policies push in one direction and social norms in the other? Research has only scratched the surface of how a wide range of social norms may influence migration and how migration policies interact with these social contexts and influence migration **aspirations** of specific groups of people.

Social transformation (ST) framework

The social transformation framework is an approach that centres on the relation between social change and migration. The notion of social transformation in migration research was proposed by Castles (2010) and further developed in the Migration as Development (MADE) project to examine the relation between deep social change at the macro level and the mobility transition theory pioneered by Zelinsky (1971) and further elaborated by Skeldon (1997). The ST framework proposes a systematic approach to observe how diverse social dimensions – economics, politics, technology, demography and culture – interplay and shape society in peculiar ways. The ST framework recognizes that societal change affects different segments of the population in a variety of ways: to observe these varied effects the ST framework suggest careful observations of how a constellation of factors interplay and change at different speeds and following distinct sequences. For example, the rapid improvement and expansion of secondary and tertiary education before the diversification from an agricultural economy may promote local economic expansion, but also migration among young people whose skills are underutilized in the local economy. Such migration **aspirations** may be short-lived in the case of a rapidly expanding economy, but may also become part and parcel of society, depending on the interplay of changing constellations of factors. The ST framework is one of the two central components of the **Temporal Multilevel Analysis (TMA) framework**.

Space and place[2]

While the terms space and place have a long history in the discipline of geography, in the context of the PACES project we adopt these terms in a pragmatic manner to capture two specific dimensions that are relevant for studying **migration decision-making processes**. The main research question in PACES refers to **migration decision-making** 'over space' referring to an interest in examining **migration decisions** in different countries and locations of residence and along migration journeys. In an abstract sense, we consider origin, transit and destination countries and cities as a *space* connected through exchanges where migration decisions are made and where we may observe mobility patterns. A *place* then may be interpreted as a node in this larger space. Places have physical and social characteristics, they have stories (which should not be necessarily interpreted as a traditional past), and are locations where people live and create their lives. In the PACES project, while space is important to explore the interaction across nodes and their influence on migration patterns, we seek to explore places, i.e., secondary cities, as physical and social places that people shape and that shape people's life. We ask how people perceive the place where they live and we consider place as an object of comparison with other spaces that may have been visited, may have been a previous place of residence or may have been explored only through images and videos or other's experiences, e.g., in migrants' narratives. We consider these places – secondary cities and specific neighborhoods – as locations where people live their everyday life, interact with other members of society, are exposed to **social norms**, and shape their **values, perceptions** and **expectations**. In some instances, research may reveal that the place has a deeper meaning as a community with a strong sense of belonging that gives people a 'sense of place.' (Agnew 2011). This, however, may not always be the case, particularly for places where mobility is high.

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[2] These definitions draw inspiration for the historical overview of the terms *space* and *place* presented in the chapter by John Agnew in the *Handbook of Geographical Knowledge* (Agnew 2011).

Temporal Multilevel Analysis (TMA) framework

The Temporal Multilevel Analysis framework starts from the position that people make decisions amidst social transformation and everyday personal change. This framework rests on five principles. First, society is in constant fluctuation and people's personal circumstances also change in reaction to external factors and different stages of the life course, e.g., finishing one's studies or getting married. Second, societal and personal changes are perceived by people who make personal evaluations of past and present changes, and elaborate **expectations** for the future. Third, **perceptions** and evaluations may not be limited to the place of residence as people may refer to other locations that are relevant in a person's life – e.g., through family history -, because of information relayed by internal and international migrants, or because migrants may compare various places where they have resided. Fourth, it seeks to uncover whether matches and mismatches between societal and personal perceptions and expectations play a distinct role in shaping **aspirations** to stay or migrate. Fifth, comparisons across these temporal and spatial dimensions, between societal and individual changes, and what is expected in the future influence personal decisions, including whether to stay or migrate. In sum, the TMA framework explores people's perceptions of their social and personal circumstances, investigates their **values** and expectations, with the understanding that these are fundamental yet relatively understudies influences on decisions to stay or migrate.

Time

In migration research, time is often used as a lens to observe shifts in migration in relation to a specific event, for example how a coup d'état, an economic crisis or the introduction of a migration policy influenced migration trends or **migration decisions**. Time is also central in the **social transformation framework**, which seeks to observe various configurations of societal changes over a long time. The social transformation framework views time from three perspectives: a particular moment in history (historical juncture), the order of societal changes (sequence of change), and the speed of change (time span) (Vezzoli, 2021). Time is also a central dimension of migration decision processes as migration decisions are thought to start much ahead of actual migration, involving phases over time (see **migration decision-making**). To study the role of passage of time on decisions to stay and migrate, it is necessary to consider how people are connected to societal and individual past experiences, current circumstances and future **expectations** and adopt an analytical past-present-future perspective (Vezzoli, 2023). In PACES, time is a central analytical lens, and it is applied to the dynamics processes of social transformations (macro level changes) and those related to the life course and individual circumstances (micro level changes).

Values

Values reveal what gives meaning and direction to life and what is central to a person's value system. Values that have been found to be relevant in decisions to stay or migrate include career, higher income, family orientation, peaceful environment, strong connection to the community, religiosity, money, or other symbols of material achievement (Williams, Thornton, and Young-DeMarco 2014). Values are personal but may influenced by the family and the community. While values and **social norms** can be regarded as the same, they are related but differ in important ways. Whereas social norms provide rules to abide, values reveal what is important in one's life and the choices they may make accordingly. Thus, identifying what people value in life can shed light on why certain people would make certain mobility choices, including staying when leaving may offer better opportunities (Clark and Lisowski 2017; Preece 2018; Mah 2009). In PACES, in addition to considering values in the way just described, we also consider valued goals as developed in the value-expectancy model. Valued goals reveal what a person seeks to attain, namely a goal that holds value to the individual. Thus, a valued goal is based on what an individual values but is attached to a specific outcome. A person may value family, but the valued goals may be to either stay close to family, regardless of the financial situation, or to migrate to earn more money to support and give higher living standards to the family. Understanding both what participants value and their valued goals merits attention as it will reveal not only what gives meaning to their lives but what outcomes they seek and the behaviors that they may pursue, including migration and other responses that involve staying.

Migration policy decision-making

Assumptions

Decision-making on (migration) policy is always based on certain assumptions about the behavior of others (e.g. migrants, voters, leaders of other states), as well as on assumptions about the social or political context within which policymakers take their decisions. Assumptions are people's expectations and hypotheses about the mechanisms underpinning how the world works, in this case about migrant behavior, voter preferences and how they relate to broader demographic, political or economic trends. Assumptions are created gradually and sometimes updated as a result of people's own experiences, knowledge basis and belief systems. They allow actors to navigate uncertain and complex environments, even if they often clash with expert knowledge on a particular issue. When assumptions are shared among policymakers and persist over time, they become key ingredients for the emergence of policy **narratives** that advance particular problem statements, cause-and-effect-statements and policy solutions. Often, assumptions are implicit – but when made explicit as a basis of policymaking, such assumptions can be formulated in terms of a **theory of change**.

Boundary work

Boundary work is a sociological concept that describes how scientists demarcate their knowledge and work from the knowledge produced by other actors by upholding a set of everyday practices "for purposes of constructing a social boundary that distinguishes some intellectual activities as 'non-science'" (Gieryn 1983: 782). This deliberate boundary work "is useful for scientists' pursuit of professional goals: acquisition of intellectual authority and career opportunities; denial of these resources to 'pseudoscientists'; and protection of the autonomy of scientific research from political interference" (Gieryn 1983: 781, see also Evans, 2008). Such boundary work is crucial to uphold not only the distinction between **expert knowledge** and other forms of knowledge, such as **non-hegemonic knowledge**, but also the distinction between policy and research worlds (Jasanoff 1987; Jasanoff 2004).

Discourse

Discourse provides the larger ideational context within which specific **narratives** emerge and are deployed by actors. Discourse is thus essential in shaping our experience of the world, it establishes the frame of what can be considered, of how social relations are understood and of what is a possible narrative given the dominant **power/knowledge** systems at play (Boswell et al. 2021). It is "a shared way of apprehending the world", which "enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories or accounts" (Dryzek 1997: 8) and thus organizes social relations (see also: Howarth 2010).

Epistemic communities

An epistemic community refers to "a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain," who share a set of normative beliefs, causal beliefs and notions of validity, and pursue a common policy goal (Haas 1992: 3). Such internal cohesion provides the members of the community with "an episteme, a shared worldview that derives from their mutual socialisation and shared knowledge" and that provides it with the legitimacy to defend a particular position (Cross 2013: 147). For PACES and migration studies in general, it is important to highlight that although studies have often focused on national epistemic communities, the transnational dimension of

epistemic communities has been highlighted since the initial conceptualization of the term in international relations research.

Evidence-based policymaking

Evidence-based (also called evidence-informed) policymaking can be defined as "a process whereby multiple sources of information, including statistics, data, and the best available research evidence and evaluations, are consulted before making a decision to plan, implement, and (where relevant) alter public policies and programmes". (OECD 2020: 9). Evidence-based policymaking has become a mantra in policymaking since the 1990s in parallel with the emergence of new public management and is often seen as a term closely aligned with the instrumental function of **expert knowledge** in policymaking.

Expert knowledge

Expert knowledge is a term commonly used to refer not only to scientific knowledge of academics and researchers based at independent or public research institutions (think tanks, in-house research units etc.), but also to technical or practice-based knowledge of those working in ministries or other relevant (international) institutions (Christensen 2021: 457). In this vein, expertise has been defined as "a codified, scholarly and professional mode of knowledge production that has its prime institutional loci in universities, policy analysis units of government departments or international organizations and private research institutes and produced by academics, think tank experts and professionals" (Stone, 2002, p.2, in Boswell 2008: 486). The literature on knowledge production however invites us to critically question who is considered an expert in the first place and to pay attention to power dynamics involved in the production and legitimation of **hegemonic knowledge**.

Framing

Framing is a process that is part of the construction of a **narrative**. It refers to the deliberate selection and emphasis of particular aspects of an issue to make those more salient in public or political debate in order to advance a particular interpretation of social reality and, relatedly, a particular problem definition and solution (Boswell et al. 2021; Entman 1993).

Hegemonic knowledge

Within a Foucauldian understanding of knowledge production as inherent to the exercise of power, dynamics of inclusion and exclusion are central. The notion of hegemonic knowledge thus "points not just to the existing dominance of a particular way of thinking" that maintains the narratives, policies, and practices in place, "but explicitly signals the active process of marginalising other forms of knowledge" (Machen and Nost 2021: 556). Identifying the actors and processes that create such boundaries of in/exclusion, maintain hegemonic knowledge, and silence counter-narratives that draw on **non-hegemonic knowledge** is central to critical policy analysis and to better understanding the inner workings of **power/knowledge** systems (Howarth 2010; Laclau and Mouffe 2014).

Ideas

Within the policymaking process, ideas refer to the knowledge, beliefs and values that inform how actors define a problem and perceive different policy options, depending on their individual preferences, institutional cultures, or dominant norms and ideologies (Hall 1997; Palier and Surel 2005). In that sense, investigating the role of knowledge in policymaking is part of a broader scholarly attempt to take the role of ideas in policymaking

seriously in their own right (Béland 2009; Bonjour 2011; Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011; FitzGerald and Hirsch 2022) – not only in addition to actors' **interests** but also as a factor shaping them.

Interests

Within the policymaking process, interests refer to the preferences of actors within and outside the political system, and the power coalitions they form to pursue them (Hall 1997; Palier and Surel 2005). Much of the policymaking literature – be they rationalist or critical accounts – has highlighted that interest advancement and power consolidation are key drivers of policy choice and policy change (Adam et al. 2020; Hartigan 1992; Rosenblum and Salehyan 2004). However, an emerging literature is arguing that **ideas** – including knowledge – have a similarly important role in policymaking and that, ultimately, interests and ideas might be "mutually constitutive" as "knowledge and beliefs clearly shape perceptions of interests; but these interests in turn influence how knowledge is produced and deployed" (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011: 5).

Knowledge-policy gap

The knowledge-policy gap refers to the fact that political decisions often do not take into account or actively disregard available expert knowledge on the policy issue at stake. It also includes the often limited communication channels or highly skewed relationships between academics and policymakers that stands at the center of scholarship examining the **science-policy interface**.

Knowledge production

The term knowledge production captures the process and dynamics that characterize the creation of (scientific or other) knowledge. Studies of knowledge production emerged within science and technology studies and critical theory to emphasize that knowledge is anything but neutral, but a product of dominant power relations and as such needs to be critically analyzed (Jasanoff 2004; Bhambra 2014; Foucault 1977). In this vein, the literature on knowledge production has focused on critically examining the power dynamics and in/exclusion practices that underpin what knowledge is considered legitimate in the first place, which is crucial to better understanding its (non)-use in policy-making.

Knowledge use

The term knowledge use (or knowledge utilization) refers to the different functions knowledge can have in the policy process. Within policy science and public administration, as well as institutionalist political science and organizational sociology, a rich literature has developed since the 1970s examining science-policy relations in order to better understand when and how expert knowledge is used (or not) in policymaking (Christensen 2021; Hoppe 1999). While scholars of knowledge use initially adopted a positivist understanding of knowledge as neutral, objective observations of social facts, this has made way to a more interpretivist, critical take on knowledge use that puts power dynamics, sense-making and interactions between experts and policymakers center-stage (Shulock 1999; Capano and Malandrino 2022; Hoppe 1999).

Migration governance

The term migration governance highlights that the regulation of migration is "not solely the domain of 'government' (i.e. the state) but rather […] emerges through the interaction of a complex assemblage of public, private, and societal stakeholders ranging from politicians, bureaucrats, NGOs and CSOs, humanitarian agencies, entrepreneurs and businesses, and international organizations" (Natter, Norman, and Stel 2023: 5). While PACES is taking into account such multi-level, increasingly transnational governance architecture in its

research on policymaking (particularly at the European level), it nonetheless argues that it is still state actors that shape the parameters for migration governance and thus ultimate **migration policy decision-making.**

Migration policy

Migration policy can be defined as "rules (i.e., laws, regulations, and measures) that national states define and [enact] with the objective of affecting the volume, origin, direction, and internal composition of […] migration flows" (Czaika and de Haas 2013: 489). In this sense, migration policy encompasses both the policies-on-paper written down by policymakers, as well as the way in which they are implemented in everyday policy practices of civil servants and street-level bureaucrats. Substantively, within PACES we focus on the rules and practices governing the selection and admission of migrants, such as border control policies, visa requirements, or regularizations, as well as a range of cooperative agreements with countries of origin or transit. We do not examine policies and processes falling under the realm of integration policy, which regulate migrant lives at the destination, such as access to labor markets, housing, education, health care of welfare systems (Hammar 1985: 7-9), as other European projects have already extensively looked at integration policies in the past (Scholten, Entzinger, and Penninx 2015; Slootjes and Zanzuchi 2023). Taken together, the policies and practices regulating migration make up a country's **migration regime**, which often turns out to display inherent contradictions and inconsistencies.

Migration policy decision-making

Migration policy decision-making refers to the complex, non-linear and often messy process through which decisions on the substantive measures regulating migration are taken (Castles 2004a; Meyers 2000; Natter 2018). This process is driven by the pursuit of – explicit and implicit – **policy objectives** and involves negotiations and compromises among a broad range of actors at national, sub-national and supra-national level (European, regional, global) who provide direct or indirect input in the policymaking process, such as political parties, labor unions, employer lobbies, human rights associations, courts, governmental advisory bodies, diplomatic partners, international organizations and experts from within and outside relevant ministerial units. Within PACES, we focus on the national and European level, seeking to understand how civil servants and politicians navigate this messy process to reach a final decision on a particular policy issue.

Migration regime

The notion of migration regime captures a country's entire set of **migration policies** and practices regulating migration. It acknowledges the historically contingent and inherently contradictory nature of state approaches to immigration: "a country's migration regime is usually not the outcome of consistent planning. It is rather a mix of implicit conceptual frames, generations of turf wars among bureaucracies and waves after waves of 'quick fix' to emergencies, triggered by changing political constellations of actors". (Sciortino 2004: 32-33). Indeed, a country's migration regime is typically a "'mixed bags of measures, containing multiple laws or decrees" that "because they are subject to different arenas of political bargaining, […] are bound to display internal incoherencies 'by design'" (de Haas, Natter, and Vezzoli 2018: 325-26).

Narratives

In a policy context, narratives are "knowledge claims about the causes, dynamics and impacts of migration […] setting out beliefs about policy problems and appropriate interventions" (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011: 1). Narratives distinguish themselves from individual speech acts in that they offer recognizable patterns of justification that are to some extent stable and consistent across actors, through space or over time (for example, the narrative around 'combatting smuggling' exists since the 1990s and has been reproduced by successive governments of different political colors). They provide individuals or organizations with a sense of coherence

and engagement that legitimizes collective beliefs and actions (Hammack and Pilecki 2012: 71). The concept of narratives is related to the more specific concept of **framing** and the broader concept of **discourse**. Narratives have an ambiguous relation to **expert knowledge** – they need to be plausible in a particular context, so they mobilize knowledge to some extent, at the same time they might tap into contradictory beliefs to appeal to a specific audience or support a particular position. According to Roe (1994: 51) a narrative thus stabilizes "the **assumptions** needed for decision making in the face of what is genuinely uncertain and complex. They can be representationally inaccurate—and recognizably so—but still persist, indeed thrive". Narratives can thus act as filters and justifications for selectively using or not using knowledge. As a consequence, alternative knowledge that clashes with dominant, **hegemonic knowledge** is often automatically disregarded.

Non-hegemonic knowledge

Non-hegemonic knowledge captures a range of knowledge practices that are generally sidelined by those in charge of taking decisions, as they are considered lacking authority or legitimacy. This can encompass experiential knowledge that "reflects lived experiences that are difficult for outsiders to capture" (Baillergeau and Duyvendak 2016: 407). In **migration policy**, these are typically migrants or migrant associations in countries of origin and destination who are targeted by the policy intervention. It can also encompass the knowledge of marginalized actors in the Global South (Alatas 2003), especially perspectives of migration scholars, civil society actors or host populations (Kabbanji 2014). Scholars exploring these non-hegemonic knowledge practices generally highlight the value of including such knowledge in **migration policy decision-making**. For instance, "the potential contribution of 'experiential experts' in shaping responses to situations characterised by high uncertainty [is that] policymakers can draw on insights into the experience of usually silent stakeholders: people deemed at risk." (Baillergeau and Duyvendak 2016: 407). Similarly, the inclusion of migration scholars and scholarship from the Global South is essential to achieve a comprehensive understanding of migration as a global phenomenon, for asking the right questions and redressing the research priorities that continue to be dominated by Global North agendas (Amelina 2022; Dahinden, Fischer, and Menet 2021; Nieswand and Drotbohm 2014; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2020; Kabbanji 2014; Nimführ 2022).

Policy objectives

Policy objectives refer to the goals pursued by policymakers when taking a decision. This can be an *interventional goal* aimed at changing a situation or the behavior of people. As Schneider and Ingram (1990: 510) highlight, "public policy almost always attempts to get people to do things they otherwise would not have done, or it enables them to do things they might not have done otherwise" In our case, the interventional goal is to shape migration patterns, i.e. who moves, when, how and where to, in order to reach a higher-level policy objective, such as filling labor shortages, reacting to a geopolitical crisis or dealing with demographic decline. Often, however, policymakers might pursue a *performative goal* with their policies, aimed at communicating to voters or specific audiences that actions are undertaken even if the policy itself might have little or no practical influence on the situation or behavior of people at stake. In **migration policy**, this is often the case for symbolic policy instruments such as stepping up border control and restrictive law enforcement measures that create an "appearance of control" (Massey et al. 1998), while simultaneously immigration continues to be tolerated or even encouraged through less mediatized policy decisions. While the literature on migration policy highlights the fact that explicitly mentioned policy objectives might differ from underlying, hidden political intentions (Castles 2004b; de Haas, Natter, and Vezzoli 2015), "even when communication is used mainly as propaganda, it always entails the development of a rationale – that is to say of a corpus of arguments and worldviews that are designed to convince the audience" (Pécoud 2023: 10). It is in this vein that within PACES we analyse policy documents and conduct interviews to identify policymakers' justification **narratives** underpinning **migration policy decision-making** and the role of **expert knowledge** within them.

Policymakers

Within PACES, we use the term policymakers to encompass both politicians – lawmakers in government and parliament – as well as civil servants – bureaucrats working in ministries and other relevant state institutions.

Politicization

Politicization refers to the process through which a topic becomes a political issue. For this to happen, the topic needs to be both salient (i.e. receive attention by the public and in the political arena) and subject to polarization (i.e. there needs to be disagreement or conflict among political parties or societal groups on how to deal with the topic) (van der Brug et al. 2015). In PACES, we are not analyzing processes of politicization per se, but we take levels of politicization as one potentially important factor shaping the use of **expert knowledge** in **migration policy decision-making**.

Power/knowledge

Power/knowledge is a concept introduced by Foucault (1980, 1977) that highlights how the exercise of power is intrinsically tied to the production and use of knowledge and, thus, that knowledge is a power tool on its own. Investigating power/knowledge systems comes down to understanding how "power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and 'truth', and [how] knowledge arises from practices of power" (Boswell et al. 2021: 7). In it in this vein that the investigation of hegemonic knowledge and non-hegemonic knowledge has been central to critical migration studies since the 2000s.

Public opinion

Public opinion refers to the position held by a significant number of individuals on a specific political issue within a given polity and is a central factor that policymakers in democracies have to navigate (Burstein 2003). Within democratic theory, public opinion is a key ingredient for functioning political life that emerges out of deliberations within the public sphere: For Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox (1974: 49-50), public opinion "refers to the tasks of criticism and control which a public body of citizens informally – and, in periodic elections, formally as well - practices vis-à-vis the ruling structure organized in the form of a state. […] public opinion can by definition only come into existence when a reasoning public is presupposed." In migration policy decision-making, public opinion (and particularly the assumption of a growing anti-migrant sentiment within public opinion) are key drivers informing which issues are set on the agenda, how they are framed and what policy options are considered by policymakers. Opinion polls, survey experiments, social media and traditional news, as well as direct citizen contact are the most common sources through which politicians gauge information about public opinion (Walgrave and Soontjens 2023; Ruhs 2022). While policy to some extent seeks to represent public opinion, public preferences also respond to policies, leading to a dynamic relationship between policy and public opinion (Atkinson et al. 2021; Soroka and Wlezien 2010).

Science-policy interface

The term science-policy interface is central in interpretative policy studies seeking to understand interactions between policymakers, policymaking and the scientific community. The term leaves behind the understanding that science-policy relations are linear, and instead portrays them as "multiple, two-way and dynamic interactions between processes of knowledge production and decision-making" (Wesselink et al. 2013: 2), which are characterized by "the scientification of politics and the politicisation of science" (Weingart 1999: 151).

Theory of change

Theory of change is a notion that emerged within the context of policy evaluation research and particularly Carol Weiss' call for theory-based evaluation, which "takes for granted that social programs are based on explicit or implicit theories about how and why the program will work" and aims to "surface those theories and lay then out in as fine detail as possible, identifying all the assumptions and sub-assumptions built into the program" (Weiss 1995: 66-67). She uses theory of change as a synonym for **assumptions** in policymaking. Within PACES, we will not use the term theory of change as a category of analysis, but as a category of practice should respondents find it useful to discuss their assumptions and the mechanisms linking policy measures and their impact on migrant behavior through this lens.

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