

The Utilization of Expert Knowledge in Times of Crisis: Budgetary and Migration Policies in the Netherlands

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Times of crisis, such as the financial and economic crisis and, more recently, the migration crisis, open windows of opportunity for agenda setting and policy change. However, the added value of policy analysis and utilization-focused evaluation is often more contested during crises: do crises provide opportunities for the utilization of expert knowledge and policy learning in order to punctuate policy deadlocks and to induce policy innovation or do crises rather inhibit opportunities for the utilization of expert knowledge and policy learning because of political contestation and establishment of a clear political primacy? Building on empirical data drawn from the Dutch comprehensive spending reviews (2010), advisory reports and policy studies, respectively, in the field of the Dutch migration and integration policy (2000–2015), we found that the utilization of expert knowledge is not much different in bad times than in good times. Rather, the type of expert knowledge as well as the way of utilization of expert knowledge is subject to change as boundary organizations are playing a key role as producers of expert knowledge in legitimating policy actors and structures and substantiating policy decisions. We conclude that expert knowledge may be a very important and powerful tool for policy coordination, precisely in the highly contested and politicized setting of a crisis.

KEY WORDS: boundary organizations, knowledge utilization, times of crisis, budgetary policy, migrant policy, The Netherlands

危急时刻利用专家知识:荷兰的预算政策和迁移政策

危急时刻,例如金融和经济危机,以及近期更常出现的迁移危机,都为议程设置和政策变化打开了机会之窗。然而,政策分析的附加价值和“以利用为重点”的评估却时常在危机中遭受质疑:危机是否为“不断介入政策僵局”和“引入政策创新”提供了使用专家知识和政策学习的机会?还是说,因为政治竞争和建立明确的政治首要地位,使得危机反而抑制了使用专家知识和政策学习机会?基于2010年荷兰综合消费评论的实证数据、咨询报告和有关2000-2015年荷兰移民融合政策的研究,本文发现:危机背景的“好”与“坏”对利用专家知识而言并不会太大差别。更准确地说,专家知识的类型和利用方式都会发生变化,因为边界组织在“将政策参与者和政策结构合法化”以及“将政策决定实体化”时扮演着专家知识生产者这一重要角色。本文结论认为:专家知识可能是用于政策协调的一项非常重要和有力的工具,严格地说,是在危机背景存在高度争议和政治化的情况下使用的政策协调工具。

关键词: 边界组织, 知识利用, 危机时刻, 预算政策, 迁移政策, 荷兰

Introduction

The British prime-minister Winston Churchill is supposed to have said “*Never let a good crisis go to waste*” for the first time.¹ A crisis, such as the financial and economic crisis and the more recent migration crisis in Europe, promotes agenda setting and open “windows of opportunity” for policy change. Think about how the financial and economic crisis has not only put economic policy reform on the agenda but also promoted institutional dynamics in the European Union. However, what role policy analysis in particular and social science research more in general can play during crises is often more contested. Do crises also open opportunities for policy learning, by promoting knowledge utilization and reflection in order to punctuate policy deadlocks and promote innovation? Or do crises rather inhibit opportunities for policy learning and knowledge utilization because of political contestation and establishment of a clear political primacy?

As it is difficult, if not impossible, to make a distinction between academic and nonacademic research (Jasanoff, 1987), we have adopted the concept of “expert knowledge,” which not only covers articles published in international peer reviewed journals but also to reports issued by advisory bodies and similar committees, which serve as boundary organizations at the nexus of policy and science.² As we will see, academics are often consulted as experts and even participate in the work of these boundary organizations (Guston, 2000). In addition, they are frequently hired by the government to do contract research.

The empirical data are taken from two policy areas that have been characterized by institutional crises over the last decade or so: economic (including fiscal) policies and migration policies. In the context of the financial and economic crisis in Europe, Dutch economic policies were reformed dramatically in order to manage spending within targets for the overall budget deficit. In the context of the broader European migration crises, Dutch migration policies (including policies at migrant integration) have also been under immense pressure to manage migration flows in a more restrictive way while promoting migrant integration to a much greater extent. Both cases do not apply to the Netherlands only but seem representative of broader crises driving policy change throughout Europe.

The theoretical ambition of this article is to learn more on what role expert knowledge plays in the context of crises. Following the work of Boswell (2009) and Jasanoff (2004), among others, we will examine what patterns of knowledge utilization can be identified and also what types of expert knowledge claims are involved. We believe that although patterns of “policy learning” may be difficult to identify empirically, patterns of knowledge utilization can be defined empirically and reveal much on the role that expert knowledge can play in policy processes. We will distinguish between instrumental and political or symbolic forms of knowledge utilization (Boswell, 2009). Furthermore, we will examine how and why actors select specific expert knowledge claims, while possibly ignoring others.

In the following sections we will first develop our key concepts and theoretical assumptions regarding the utilization of expert knowledge, and discuss the methodology of our research. Secondly, we develop our two case studies on

knowledge utilization in two crises-prone policy areas in the Netherlands. Subsequently, we will analyze and compare patterns of knowledge utilization in both areas, and draw up some conclusions regarding the role of expert knowledge in contested policy areas.

Knowledge Utilization in Policy Processes

Within policy sciences a broad literature has emerged on the role of knowledge in policy processes. Studies have focused among others on how knowledge is used, by whom, in what stages of the policy process and to what effect in terms of policy change. A key reference in this literature is Carol Weiss's study on the enlightenment function of knowledge and her notion of the gradual "knowledge creep" (1979). Weiss was an early scholar to draw attention to what Hecló (1974) has described as the key role of "puzzling" besides the role of "powering" in policy processes. This has given birth to a long tradition in policy studies focusing on the instrumental use of knowledge in policy processes. A recent development in this tradition is the revival of attention for so-called "evidence-based policymaking" (see also Sanderson, 2002), which also exhibits a strong belief in the instrumental role of knowledge in all stages of the policy cycle.

This belief in the instrumental value of knowledge in policy processes is also manifest in the literature on "policy learning." Sabatier (1998) defines policy learning as "the adjustment of policy beliefs in response to knowledge, information, and experiences." The notion of knowledge learning thus creates a direct relation between knowledge utilization and policy change. However, as not only Sabatier (1998) but also Hall (1993) argue, the potential for learning may be limited for instance by the political and institutional setting in which learning takes place.

The prevailing view on knowledge utilization at the turn of the century is well articulated by Rob Hoppe claiming that the results of policy research are hardly used in a direct instrumental way, that is, for the solution of problem in society:

The impact of professional policy analysis is limited, and adds only modest increments to the ordinary knowledge of politicians and public officials. Policy analysts are condemned to provide argumentative ammunition for the rhetorical struggles of politicians (policy analysis as argument or data, Weiss, 1979) only occasionally they discover a nugget of enlightenment (policy analysis as idea) (Hoppe, 1999, p. 206).

As has been argued by Christina Boswell, the basic assumption underling the "enlightenment function" of research is very much instrumental, that is, aimed at impact, although indirect and in the long run, on current policy (Boswell, 2009, p. 5).³ She argues that we should look more at the political or symbolic modes of knowledge utilization, that is, for other purposes than the solution of problems in society. Following Christina Boswell, a distinction can be made between roughly three modes of knowledge utilization, which may be depicted as below (Figure 1).

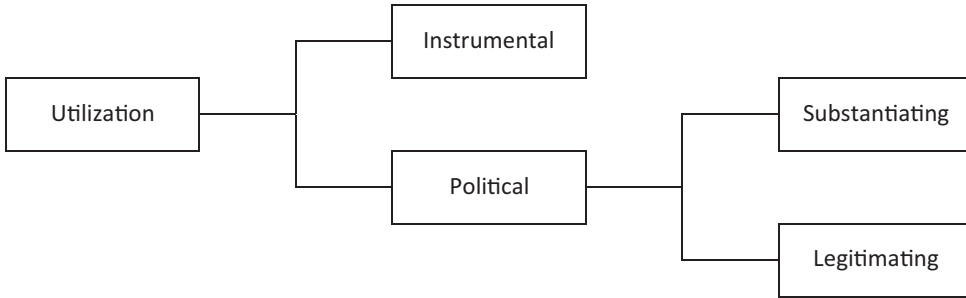


Figure 1. Three Modes of Knowledge Utilization.

Source: Boswell (2008).

The various modes of knowledge utilization may be characterized as follows:

1. Instrumental utilization, which covers both the problem-solving model (direct) and the enlightenment function (indirect) of knowledge utilization (Weiss, 1979, p. 427). It is closely related to the pursuit of evidence-based policy making (Scholten, Entzinger, Penninx & Verbeek, 2015, p. 6);
2. Political or symbolic utilization, which may be subdivided into two broad categories:
 - a. Substantiating utilization, which may be either positive or negative. In the first case expert knowledge is used to justify a preferred, often predetermined policy choice. In the latter case, expert knowledge is used as ammunition to challenge or even undermine the position of an opponent in the political arena (Schrefler, 2010, p. 320);
 - b. Legitimizing utilization, which points to the effort of an organization to boost its authority, credibility, reputation, and/or power *vis-à-vis* other actors.

The various modes of knowledge utilization are not mutual exclusive. The generation of information may back a claim, which may add to the credibility of the policy maker and, ultimately, will solve a problem in society.⁴ Consequently, we expect to find a combination of knowledge utilization.

The academic debate on knowledge utilization has got a boost recently by the attention to boundary organizations in the field of the policy sciences (Hoppe, 2010),⁵ *inter alia*, pointing at the role of advisory bodies and other institutions as in between (brokers, interpreters) at the interface of what Nathan Caplan once has called the two communities metaphor (Caplan, 1979).⁶ As a result, both sides of the science-policy nexus have induced each other, leading to a “scientification of policy” and the “politicization of science” (Weingart, 1999). One may even argue that the policy space is now composed of three communities. The latter serves as

a platform for dialogue and exchange of ideas (Lindquist, 1990; Radaelli, 1995, p. 175–6).

In this paper, we will look at the utilization of expert knowledge. It is usually associated with two characteristics, although they are not always met in reality. First, the qualification of the *producers* of information, which are typically located, although not exclusively, in an academic or a research institute.⁷ Second, the qualification of the *outcome* of their work as measured by theoretical and methodological standards. However, the boundary between expert knowledge and laymen's knowledge is blurred, fluid, and frequently contested (Boswell, 2008; Bekkers 2015; Jasanoff, 1987). Furthermore, there is a trade-off between scientific (epistemological) and nonscientific (practical) standards, such as the implementability and connection with the existing strategy (van de Vall, 1980). It does not make much sense to come up with a proposal for which there is no support in politics or society (Leeuw, 1987, p. 164). Besides, the outcome of research that comes too late is perceived as mustard after dinner (Knott & Wildavsky, 1980, p. 548). What counts as expert knowledge is ultimately contingent on the beliefs and interests of the administrators who are making use of it (Boswell, 2009, 23–5).

The notion of boundary work draws attention to how research-policy relations also involve an element of selecting (and sometimes even producing) specific expert knowledge claims (Hoppe, 2005; Jasanoff, 1990). The relationship between research and policy is often not linear but mutual. This is also due to the plurality of knowledge claims that often characterizes specific policy subsystems. In any policy area there will mostly be multiple knowledge producers working with different methods, concepts, and theories, thus sustaining specific paradigms or research traditions. Some of these might find easier access to the policymaking process, leading to what Jasanoff (2004) has described as a *coproduction* of knowledge by researchers and policymakers. This resembles what in the broader policy science literature is described as epistemic communities or discourse coalitions of which both researchers and policymakers can be part.

A key type of actor on which we will focus in this article involves *boundary organizations* (Guston, 2000; Miller, 2001). This involves organizations that operate on the boundaries of research and policy and often play an intermediary or brokerage role in mutual relations. This can for instance involve advisory bodies that upon request of government institutions bring together the available knowledge and expertise on a specific topic (Stone, 1998). However, they can also involve think tanks, consultancy firms, government research, or so-called "universities without students." A characteristic for boundary organizations is that they often operate as "bridges" or "transmission belts" between the worlds of research and policy. It makes them well situated to play a key role not only in terms of the distribution of knowledge but also in terms of the (co)production of knowledge.

In this article, we examine what patterns of knowledge utilization emerge in times of crisis, based on qualitative analysis of policymaking in the two selected

policy areas. The data are primarily taken from policy records (policy documents, policy memoranda, records/minutes of parliamentary hearings) issued from the start of the financial and economic crisis in 2008, respectively, in the context of Europe's debate on the migration crisis which emerged in the 2000s and recently intensified in the run-up to the current refugee crisis.

Methodological Note

The study follows a similar case study design of two policy areas that have in common that both have been prone to what is perceived as "crisis." However, in order to be able to draw more general inferences on the role of knowledge and knowledge utilization in policy areas in crisis, we selected two areas that have little in common apart from being in "crisis"; budgetary policies and migration/integration policies. The empirical data are taken from the Dutch budgetary policy and migration and integration policy, respectively. The question may be raised on how the crisis affects the production and utilization of expert knowledge. On the one hand, there may be demand for expert knowledge to deal with the crisis. On the other, time may be simply lacking to produce, if not to use expert knowledge. We zoom in on the role of boundary organizations in the production and, subsequently, utilization of expert knowledge.

For both policy areas a qualitative approach was adopted in the study of policy processes and the utilization of knowledge in those policy processes. The outcome of the Dutch spending review is analyzed with the help of a search engine, looking for literature references in the text of reports as well as endnotes and footnotes.⁸ The *gross* number of literature references is controlled for overlap. That is, the figures below refer to the *net* number of literature references. Finally, the literature references are categorized in six broad categories of providers of expert knowledge. The advisory bodies stand for 36.4% of the sample (see Annex B), justifying a closer inspection of that category. As we will see, the Centaal Planbureau (Netherlands Institute for Economic Policy Analysis) happens to be the largest provider by far of expert knowledge with 23.4% of the advisory bodies (see Figure 3), which does not come as a surprise given the mission of the task forces.

For migration and integration policies also a qualitative analysis was made on the utilization of knowledge in policymaking. This involved a broad analysis of advisory reports and references to research reports in policy memoranda in the period 2000–2015. This analysis was part of a broader project into the relationship between research and policymaking in migration and integration policies in the Netherlands (see also Scholten et al., 2015).⁹ This analysis revealed a key role of specific boundary organizations, in particular the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy and the Social and Cultural Planning Office. Consequently, the analysis in this paper focused in particular on the role of these two organizations.

The Dutch Comprehensive Spending Reviews (2010)

Introduction

The budgetary policy of the Dutch is the subject of coordination by the European Union, although the budgetary policy still belongs to the domain of the European member states.¹⁰ More precisely, the European member states are obliged under the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) to reduce their budget deficit below the reference value of 3 percent of GDP as well as their gross debt below the reference value of 60 percent of GDP.¹¹ In an effort to meet its requirements the Dutch government, building on a previous experience in the 1980s, launched a one-off comprehensive spending review (Brede Heroverwegingen [BHO]) in the run-up to the elections of 2010.

The comprehensive spending reviews may be considered as a mode of policy analysis or, more precisely, utilization-focused evaluation (Patton, 2008; van Nispen, 2015, p. 4) geared toward a more evidence-based budgetary, notably retrenchment policy. Consequently, one may expect that the outcome of the comprehensive spending reviews will be primarily used in an instrumental way. We distinguish basically two levels of knowledge utilization:

1. The utilization of both academic and nonacademic studies, which are often delivered for other purposes, in the context of the spending reviews;
2. The utilization of the findings of the comprehensive spending reviews for a reduction of public expenditures and, consequently, the budget deficit.

In sum, 20 special task forces have been assigned to generate cheaper alternatives for current policies of which of minus 20 percent of the baseline. Chaired by independent civil servants, they had 6 months to complete their mission.^{12,13}

Boundary Organizations

In this section, we will look at the advisory bodies first and then zoom in on the role of the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (Centraal Planbureau [CPB]) as the main supplier of expert knowledge in the context of the comprehensive spending reviews. At the same time we will expand the scope from literature references to the involvement of a researcher from the CPB as an expert in the work of the special task forces and the assessment of the impact of the potential savings (CPB 2010).

In sum, we found 330 references to the literature adjusted for duplication in the body text of the comprehensive spending reviews, which is 16.5 references per report. The front runner is the report on Public Safety and Terrorism (nr. 15) with not the less than 50 references. On the other side of the spectrum is the report on International Security (nr. 20) with one single reference to the literature. Clearly there is no academic culture in this field regarding the account for its sources of information. In addition, we may look at the reference list at the end of the report,

showing that only 7 out of 20 task forces referred to the literature that they used to accomplish their mission.

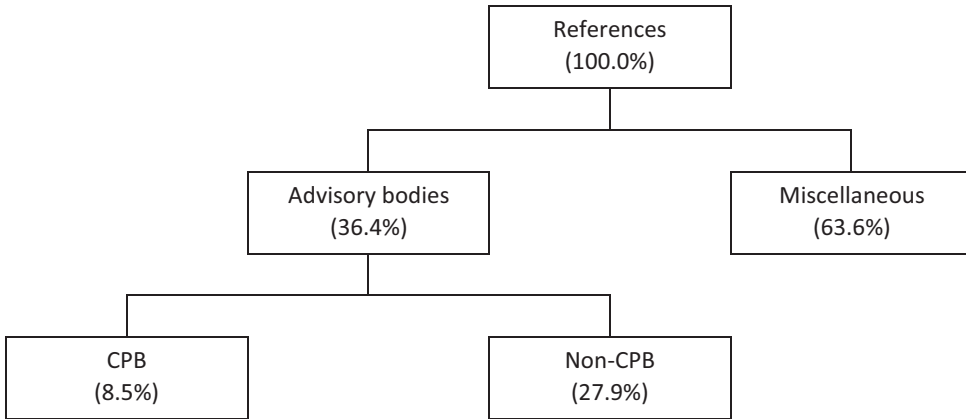


Figure 2. The Number of Literature References in the Comprehensive Spending Reviews.
Note: CPB stands for Centraal Planbureau (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis).

Source: BHO 2010 (Own Calculations).

A closer inspection of the comprehensive spending reviews reveals that more than a third of the references to the literature (36.4%) consists of publications of advisory bodies (see Figure 2), which justifies a closer inspection of this category. A breakdown of the advisory bodies is provided below (see Figure 3), showing that the CPB—not surprisingly—happens to be the main supplier of expert knowledge in the context of the comprehensive spending reviews (see Annex B).

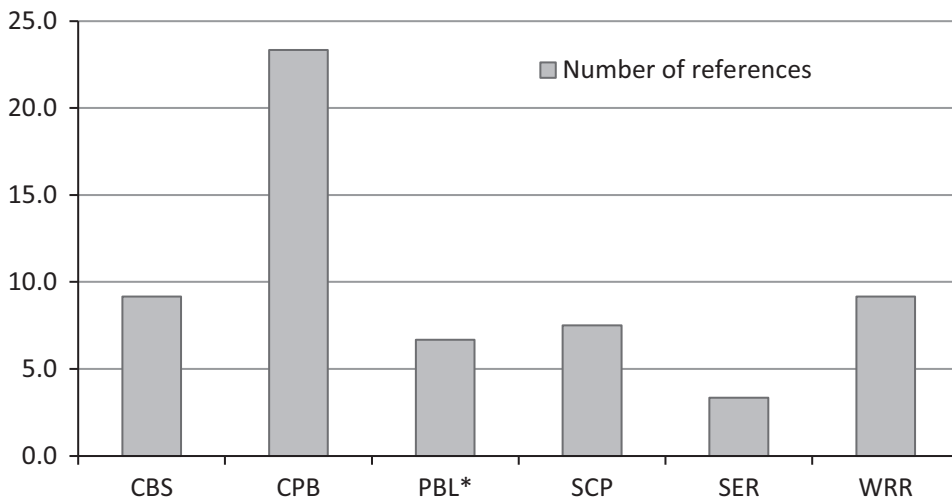


Figure 3. A Breakdown of the References to Advisory Reports in the Comprehensive Spending Reviews (n = 120).¹⁴

Note: PBL includes references to the RIVM and RPD that work in the same field.

Source: BHO 2010 (Own Calculations).

In total, 28 references to the CPB, adjusted for duplication, has been found, which stands for 8.5 percent of the sample.¹⁵ However, the impact of the CPB should not be underestimated as 13 observers and researchers of the CPB were formally involved in the work of the special task forces, while many special task forces have consulted the CPB informally. Furthermore, 5 out of 20 special task forces applied or followed the methodology used by the CPB and 10 out of 20 special task forces have invited the CPB to assess the potential savings critically with the help of a macroeconomic model (Centraal Planbureau [CPB], 2010), which points at the utilization of expert knowledge for legitimating and/or substantiating purposes.

Finally, a more in-depth analysis has been made of the references to the publications of the CPB, ranging from the enlightenment function by providing insight in the facts and figures to the substantiating function by drawing arguments or counterarguments regarding potential savings. However, this is mostly done in a methodological sound way, balancing information before adopting a specific course of action. As such, the comprehensive spending reviews happen to be more evidence-based than may be thought on the basis of the instrumental utilization of expert knowledge.

Knowledge Utilization

In sum, the special task forces identified € 42.5 billion of potential savings, amply exceeding the € 35 billion target. In fact, potential savings are even higher as saving options may be combined to even further reaching spending cuts.¹⁶ In addition, the sum of the most far reaching options accounts for 25.0 percent of the review base and is, as such, topping the 20 percent mark.

However, it should be noted that most saving options were not completely new as they were already figured on the so-called Gerritse list, named after the then permanent secretary of the Dutch ministry of Finance, which may be characterized best as an educated guess of saving options. One may argue that the comprehensive spending reviews provided a reliable foundation to the Gerritse list and, as such, may be considered as substantiating utilization of expert knowledge.

The findings of the comprehensive spending reviews have served as input for the election manifestos of the political parties in the run-up to the elections due to the fall of the incumbent coalition and later became part of the negotiations about the new coalition agreement. The centerpiece of the agreement is an austerity package of € 18.0 billion in FY 2015, explicitly referring to the findings of the comprehensive spending reviews. In total, € 2.5 billion has been used, which equals about 16.9 percent of the austerity package. The instrumental utilization is even paler, that is, 5.4 percent, when it is related to the sum of the most far reaching options generated by the taskforces (Van Nispen and Klaassen, 2010).

Recently, the Court of Audit issued a report on the costs and benefits of six austerity packages, covering the period running from 2011 until 2016 (Algemene Rekenkamer 2016). As for the utilization of the outcome of the comprehensive spending reviews one may conclude that 7 out of 37 measures are not effectuated,

reducing the added value of the comprehensive spending reviews by 0.7 billion euro's to 1.8 billion euro's. All but one has been replaced by other measures, so that the overall reduction in public expenditures is hardly touched by the cancellation of these measures. Furthermore, the CPB has calculated that a third (33.8%) of the Rutte I austerity package faded away due to a combination of (1) the multiplier effect of the spending cuts on the economy and (2) the elasticity of the budget to changes in the economy (Suyker, 2016; Algemene Rekenkamer 2016).¹⁷ Applied to the measures that have been drawn from the comprehensive spending reviews, another 0.5 billion euros leaked away (see Annex A). As a result, almost 1.1 billion euros materialized (Figure 4), that is, 47.7 percent of the savings due to the comprehensive spending reviews. The outcome stands for 25.5 percent of the *realized* savings of the Rutte I austerity package.¹⁸ Note that the exact amount is unclear as the impact of the savings on economic growth is calculated on the basis of the standard multiplier.¹⁹

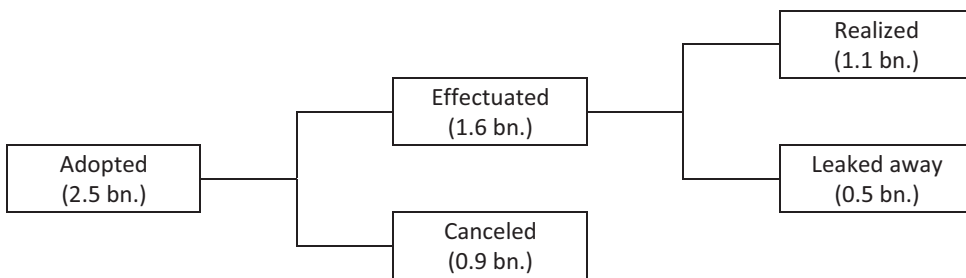


Figure 4. The Utilization of the Comprehensive Spending Reviews.

Source: Algemene Rekenkamer 2016; Suyker 2016 (Own Calculations).

At face value, the *instrumental* utilization of the comprehensive spending reviews may be somewhat disappointing, but it should be noted that it simply takes time to have effect. On one hand, the utilization of the comprehensive spending reviews may grow further over time, notably in case of ongoing austerity. Besides, comprehensive spending reviews are used as a lever during budget talks by preparing the ground for spending cuts that are not rooted in the comprehensive spending reviews. It goes too far to attribute these spending cuts to the comprehensive spending reviews, but it seems to be plausible that they would not be considered otherwise, let alone realized (van Nispen, 1993, p. 121; van Nispen, 2015, p. 12). On the other hand, a budget must be considered as a plan and saving options often do not materialize due to a wide variety of reasons. Finally, one may point at *noninstrumental*, that is, political utilization of the spending reviews as they backed the austerity package of the Rutte 1 coalition (substantiating). Although it is more common these days to refer to the source of information in public documents, we believe that the number of literature references in the reports of the task forces is not representative as it is biased by a deliberate effort to substantiate the claims by expert knowledge provided by boundary organizations.

In addition it even further strengthened the position of the minister of Finance, which is already stronger during a downturn than during an upswing of the economy (Randma-Liiv & Savi, 2016, p. 239), by providing ammunition *vis-à-vis* the spending departments (legitimizing) during the subsequent negotiations about next year's budget.

The Dutch Migration and Integration Policies (2000–2015)

Introduction

Just like in various other European countries, migration and integration have become issues of fierce public contestation over the last decade or so. This was due, on the hand, to the increase in migration flows into the Netherlands. Besides immigration from former Dutch colonies such as Surinam and the Antilles and from former guest-labor countries such as Turkey and Morocco, migration from especially other EU countries increased in the second half of the 2000s. Furthermore, since 2015, the number of refugee migrants increased steeply, as in many other European countries.

On the other hand, besides the impact of increasing immigration levels, the politicization of migration and integration within the national political arena also played a key role in policy contestation. Already in the early 2000s a strong influence emerged of populist parties such as first the Pim Fortuyn Party and later the more pronounced anti-immigrant Freedom Party. This created enormous political pressure for changes in Dutch policies to promote the sociocultural integration of newcomers and to impose restrictions for further immigration.

Although migration policies are to a large extent Europeanized, the Dutch policies on migrant integration did change significantly in the period under study in this article. The integration policy that had traditionally focused primarily on socioeconomic participation changed into an "Integration Policy New Style" (TK 2003–2004 29203, Nr. 1) with much more emphasis on sociocultural integration. For instance, basic knowledge of Dutch history, values and norms was included into civic integration tests that newcomers had to pass before getting a permanent residence permit. What is more, the responsibility for integration was individualized to the migrants themselves. This also includes financial responsibility. Migrants had to prepare and pay themselves for civic integration courses and the test itself.

Another side of this assimilationist turn in Dutch policies was a government retrenchment out of the field of migrant integration. The budget for migrant integration was brought down to almost zero. Moreover, the coordination structure was largely dismantled. Rather than having one integration policy with its own coordination structure, integration was now "mainstreamed" (Scholten et al., 2015) into generic policies. It became part of policies directed at the whole population, such as education, housing, and labor. As a consequence, much of the previous national integration policies were decentralized to the cities where most migrants lived.

Boundary Organizations

In the policy change that was defined above, several advisory bodies played a role. One advisory body that has traditionally played a key role in migrant integration policies was the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid*, WRR). The WRR is a semi-independent think tank that provides interdisciplinary reports on topics that are relevant to policy making in various departments and over a relatively long term. Reports from the WRR had already played a key role in major changes in migrant integration policies in the decades before (WRR 1979; WRR 1989) (Scholten, 2009). During the 2000s the WRR once again published two reports on migrant integration; one in 2001 (Netherlands as Immigration Society) and one in 2007 (Identification with the Netherlands).

These two reports echoed strongly with developments in the international migration literature that highlighted a growing mobility and diversification of societies in the context of the ongoing process of globalization. More people were able to migrate over greater distances, and as a consequence the diversity of society increased further. This also involved the formation of transnational communities with migrants keeping feet in more than one world, for instance leading to dual citizenship. As a consequence, identification with a society would no longer be exclusive in the context of an increasingly mobile world. Migrants can identify with societies in many different ways, in functional ways such as related to world, as well as in emotive ways (feeling at home) or cultural ways (feeling part of a broader community). One of the key conclusions of the 2007 report, as paraphrased by a Dutch princess at the time of the launch of the report, was that “the Dutchman does not exist.”

Besides the WRR, another important boundary organization involved in this domain is the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP). Like the WRR, the SCP is a semi-independent knowledge producer, which formally resorts within the Department of Public Health and Welfare. Although the WRR produces mostly conceptual studies for policies on the longer term, the SCP produces statistics on the social and cultural position of Dutch society. This includes so-called “ethnic statistics,” or data on the position of specific groups, such as migrant minorities. Together with the Central Planning Office (CPB), the SCP produces integration monitors that provide information on various aspects of the position of migrants, such as income, work, educational achievements, crime, and various social-cultural indicators such as mutual attitudes between migrants and natives.

An important foundation for the work of the SCP (and CPB) is a collection of “ethnic statistics” on migrants. Such statistics are based on a distinction between natives (“autochthonous”) and immigrants (“allochthonous”). In the statistics, anyone who is born outside the Netherlands or of whom at least one of the parents is born outside the Netherlands is considered “allochthonous.” This means that data allow for monitoring not just of first but also second-generation migrants, who actually are born in the Netherlands.

These data showed among others that although various “objective” indicators such as educational performance and language comprehension showed improvement, various “subjective” indicators such as mutual attitudes showed deterioration. It also showed that the labor market position of migrants was very vulnerable during the financial-economic crisis and that crime rates were particularly high among specific migrant groups (Moroccans and Antilleans).

Knowledge Utilization

The two boundary organizations identified above played very different roles in the policy changes that occurred in Dutch migrant integration policies in the last decade or so. Although earlier WRR reports (1979, 1989) had triggered major changes in migrant integration policies, the 2001 and 2007 reports remained largely ignored. There was a misfit between the reports’ focus on internationalization and transnationalization and the policy focus on assimilation that emerged in the 2000s.

What is more, the scientific credibility and authority of the WRR was put on the line in public and political debate surrounding these reports (Scholten, 2011; Scholten & Timmermans, 2010). Especially, the 2007 report led to broad political indignation as it questioned the image of one clear Dutch identity. This indignation not only confronted the Dutch princess Maxima who held a speech at the launch of the report but also led to open questions by parliamentarians about the value of having a WRR in the first place. The report hardly had any concrete effect on policy, besides the discursive effect of functioning as an element from which assimilationists could distance themselves.

In contrast, the reports from the SCP became increasingly prominent markers for policy developments. For instance, various important policy documents (such as the latest “integration letter” of the Minister of Social Affairs in 2015) were positioned as government responses to SCP reports with updates of data on the position of “allochthonous.” Also for the media, the launch of new data was often a key moment of agenda setting.

There are various aspects to how these SCP reports were used in the policy process. As the SCP delivers primarily data rather than policy advice, its instrumental use is very limited. On various occasions, government departments did announce concrete policy measures in response to the data from SCP, for instance when data showed that unemployment or crime had increased among specific groups.

However, both forms of symbolic knowledge utilization figured very prominently. Having data that distinguished between “autochthonous” and “allochthonous” and provided information on differences in their socioeconomic and sociocultural position, substantiated the idea of having an integration policy. It substantiated the belief that a policy is required to intervene in the position of migrants. Furthermore, especially in the context of government retrenchment, and budget cuts, the data from the SCP also legitimated the coordination of this integration policy. Apart from statistics, the coordinating minister actually had very

few instruments let alone means to achieve policy goals. Due to the mainstreaming of migrant integration, the effectiveness of policy was dependent to a very large extent upon efforts made by other departments in other policy areas such as education, labor, and housing.

The case of the SCP reveals a clear element of coproduction as defined by Jasanoff (2004). The key symbolic importance of the ethnic statistics produced by SCP also legitimated the position of SCP as a leading knowledge producer on migrant integration. Consequently, this also legitimated the collection of ethnic statistics on and the distinction between “allochthonous” and “autochthonous.” At the same time, our case analysis showed how knowledge that was produced outside this intimate coproduction relationship between government and SCP, was largely ignored (Entzinger and Scholten 2015).

Conclusion

In this paper, we looked at the utilization of expert knowledge in times of crisis. Our analysis of two crisis-prone policy areas in the Netherlands shows only little proof of instrumental knowledge utilization. However, rather than knowledge being utilized less in contested crisis, our study shows rather that knowledge is utilized in different way. We found evidence of more political or symbolic forms of knowledge utilization. This not only involved substantiating existing policies but also legitimating policy actors and coordination structures. In fact, our study shows that in both cases knowledge could be considered a very important tool for policy coordination, precisely in a highly politicized setting of a crisis.

The findings of this study indicate that expert knowledge is used instrumentally, but modestly. As for the comprehensive spending reviews we expected to find more support for the instrumental mode of knowledge utilization as they are geared to a more evidence-based budgetary policy. In total, only 5.4 percent of the sum of the most far reaching options generated by the special task forces is used for the austerity package of the Rutte I cabinet. It makes up for 16.9 percent of the spending cuts of the austerity package.²⁰ So, we have to conclude that the budgetary policy is still not evidence-based, but rather opinion-based relying on “either the selective use of evidence . . . or on the untested views of individuals or groups, often inspired by ideological stand points, prejudices or speculative conjecture” (Davies, 2004, p. 3).

In addition, one may argue that that the comprehensive spending reviews built up to the authority, if not the power of the ministry of Finance *vis-à-vis* the spending departments. It provides the civil servants of the ministry of Finance with ammunition during the annual negotiations about next year’s budget. The outcome of the spending reviews often served as the opening bid during the negotiations to be replaced by another savings, which are not based on evidence, but on an educated guess. Although, it seems to be plausible that these savings would not be realized without the comprehensive spending reviews. Unfortunately, the lever function of expert knowledge is not easy to trace back as the

negotiations take place behind closed doors and the proceedings are not accounted for in the budget. Contrary though to the past reference is made to the sources of information in the budget memorandum.

As for the role of expert knowledge in the comprehensive spending reviews, one may conclude that the outcome of research conducted for other purposes is mainly used selectively, that is, either as an argument or as a counter-argument, pointing at the substantiating function of utilization of expert knowledge. In addition, research is contracted out as many task forces have been commissioned the CPB to assess the potential savings critically with the help of a macroeconomic model. Besides, many experts of the CPB were involved in the work of the special task forces.

In the case of Dutch immigrant integration policies, our analysis shows that the context of crisis and the sharp politicization of Dutch integration policies did not mean that knowledge utilization became either more prominent or rare. Rather, the type of knowledge as well as the way it is used changed during the crisis. The focus of knowledge changed from the delivery of "conceptual" advice to the provision of data and descriptive statistics about the position of migrants. At the same time the instrumental type of knowledge utilization that had given the WRR reports from the past a key role in policy changes, made place for more symbolic forms of knowledge utilization due to the sharp politicization of migration.

It is important to note that the symbolic forms of knowledge utilization that we found in this case do not so much refer to political symbolism. Rather, within the politicized policy setting and in the context of growing fragmentation of integration policies ("mainstreaming"), knowledge played a key role in both substantiating and legitimating the remaining central integration policy and policy coordination structure. In fact, precisely within the politicized setting of this policy domain, knowledge was one of the few tools left for policy coordination. With the help of the facts and figures regarding the position of migrants, other departments could be made aware of the sense of urgency to implement integration policies. This shows that symbolic knowledge utilization can be a very powerful form of knowledge utilization.

To summarize, this analysis adds to our understanding of knowledge utilization at times of crisis. The policy studies literature has focused much on the instrumental use of knowledge in processes of policy learning, and has "found" that the potential role of learning in policy change often appears rather limited; especially when it comes to situations of "crises" where fundamental policy assumptions (deeper level policy beliefs) are at stake. However, our analysis shows that expert knowledge can be very important and powerful also in situations of contestation or crisis. Perhaps not contributing to learning *per se*, political or symbolic forms of knowledge utilization appear to play a key role in legitimating policy actors and structures as well as substantiating policy decisions.

Finally, the fact that these findings are based on an analysis of two policy areas that have little in common apart from being in crisis, speaks to the external validity of the argument made in this article. However, as a one-off effort to

reduce the budget deficit, the Dutch comprehensive spending review is relatively unique and, as such, not representative for other policy fields. As mentioned before the political or symbolic utilization of expert knowledge provided by boundary organizations seems to be influenced positively by the pursuit of an evidence-based budgetary policy. One may question if that will also apply to other policy fields, notably those which are not subject to a crisis. The political or symbolic utilization of expert knowledge is of all times, but may be more prominent as well as more visible in times of crisis.

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Notes

1. He referred to the situation after the Second World War that allowed for the formation of the United Nations.
2. In the remaining sections of this paper we will use theory, knowledge, and research as being interchangeable, although they are not exactly the same.
3. In an earlier publication about the Dutch spending reviews in the 1980, I followed the line of direct vs. indirect knowledge utilization, the latter being composed of the conceptual function (enlightenment) and political function of research (van Nispen, 1993).
4. The essential difference between substantiating and legitimating is in the relation with the content of the policy solution (Rimkutė & Haverland, 2015, p. 438–39).
5. The issue of boundary work is usually attributed to the sociologist Thomas Gieryn in an effort to distinguish science from nonscience.
6. It is in the interest of both communities to keep the boundaries in tact. For scientists, it is crucial for sustaining their claim that they produce authoritative information; for policy makers, authoritative information may strengthen the credibility of the expertise (Boswell, 2009, p. 25).
7. Note that expert knowledge may be also produced by a special unit/"in house," but is generally not considered as part of the job description.
8. The literature references in the annexes are left out.
9. The DIAMINT project on "Research-Policy Dialogues on Migration and Integration in Europe." See: www.diamint.eu.
10. The European semester and the accompanying Six-Pack, Two-Pack, and Fiscal Compact still did not arrive at that time.
11. In fact, the constraints are more stringent as the country-specific Medium-Term Budgetary Objective (MTO), that is, the actual budget balance net of the cyclical component and one-off and other temporary measures, is set at -0.5 percent of GDP at market prices.
12. The task forces were established on September 25, 2009, following the submission of the budget memorandum for FY 2010. The reports were submitted to parliament on April 1, 2010 (BHO, 2009).
13. The reports have become subject of political debate due to the fall of the incumbent cabinet.
14. CBS = Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Statistics Netherlands); CPB = Centraal Planbureau (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis); PBL = Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency); SCP = Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau

(Netherlands Institute for Social Research); SER = Sociaal-Economische Raad (Social and Economic Council); WRR = Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy).

15. The reports of the CPB stand for 23.3 percent of the references to advisory bodies as the largest category of the references to the literature.
16. The amount is growing even further beyond FY 2015 to €55 billion.
17. The leakage of the six austerity packages reviewed by the AR/CPB is even higher: almost 50 percent of the savings faded away.
18. The austerity package of the Rutte I coalition was composed of 3.2 billion euros inherited from the Balkenende IV coalition and 14.8 billion euros of additional savings of which 5.0 billion euros faded away (33.8 percent).
19. As a rule of the thumb a multiplier of 0.5 may be used in the case of an average package of revenues and expenditures. However, there are signs that the multiplier is higher in times of recession (Suyker 2016, p. 8).
20. A substantial higher degree of instrumental utilization of expert knowledge is reported by Rimkutė & Haverland on the basis of a recent survey among 120 academics serving on expert groups under auspices of the Commission, as such adopting a supplier's perspective (Rimkutė & Haverland, 2015). In this study, we look at the utilization of expert knowledge from a user's perspective.

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Annex A

Overview of the Dutch Comprehensive Spending Reviews, FY 2010

Number	Name	Review Base	Maximum Option	Adopted	Effectuated	Canceled
1	Energy and Climate	1.85	0.47			
2	Environment and Nature	1.92	0.57	0.41	0.28	0.12
3	Mobility and Water	8.63	1.70	0.61	0.61	
4	Housing	12.73	5.60			
5	Schemes for Children	5.81	1.06	0.02		0.02
6	Productivity in Education	9.07	1.80	0.20		0.20
7	Higher Education	20.38	1.40	0.30		0.30
8	Innovation and Applied Research	1.87	0.38			
9	Programs for People with Few Skills	19.49	5.50			
10	Unemployment Benefits	6.69	3.10			
11	Curative Health Care	33.20	6.73	0.09	0.09	
12	Long-Term Health Care	20.81	4.40	0.21		0.21
13	International Cooperation	5.38	0.99	0.05	0.05	
14	Asylum, Immigration, and Integration	1.52	0.39	0.09	0.06	0.03
15	Public Safety and Terrorism	10.29	2.12	0.41	0.38	0.03
16	Tax Administration	2.00	0.18			
17	Supplementary Benefits	0.23	0.13			
18	Public Administration	N/A	1.80	0.12	0.12	
19	Public Management	N/A	2.00			
20	International Security	7.74	2.10			
Total		169.62	42.42	2.50	1.59	0.91

Source: Brede Heroverwegingen (BHO), 2010 (own calculations).

Annex B
Literature References to Advisory Bodies in the Comprehensive Spending
Reviews, FY 2010

Number	Name	Body Text			Reference List
		Total	Advisory Body	CBP	
1	Energy and Climate	20	5	1	16
2	Environment and Nature	15	5	0	
3	Mobility and Water	6	4	3	38
4	Housing	5	2	2	
5	Schemes for Children	34	6	2	
6	Productivity in Education	32	10	5	29
7	Higher Education	26	8	2	
8	Innovation and Applied Research	10	3	1	
9	Programs for People with Few Skills	9	4	1	
10	Unemployment Benefits	25	13	4	27
11	Curative Health Care	13	5	1	
12	Long-Term Health Care	20	7	2	
13	International Cooperation	6	4	1	49
14	Asylum, Immigration, and Integration	14	2	0	
15	Public Safety and Terrorism	50	23	1	47
16	Tax Administration	2	1	1	
17	Supplementary Benefits	3	1	0	
18	Public Administration	35	16	1	36
19	Public Management	4	1	0	
20	International Security	1	0	0	
Total		330	120	28	242
Average/Total		100.0	36.4	8.5	