

Migration governance in the context of uncertainty
*Data-Driven Decision-Making in Migration Management:
opportunities and challenges*

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Migration -



a complex phenomenon to measure and manage



Why do we need (new) data sources for migration policy and management?



MULTITUDE OF POLICY-RELATED QUESTIONS ON MIGRATION THAT WE (AND POLICYMAKERS) CAN ONLY ANSWER INTUITIVELY, AND THROUGH SPECULATION



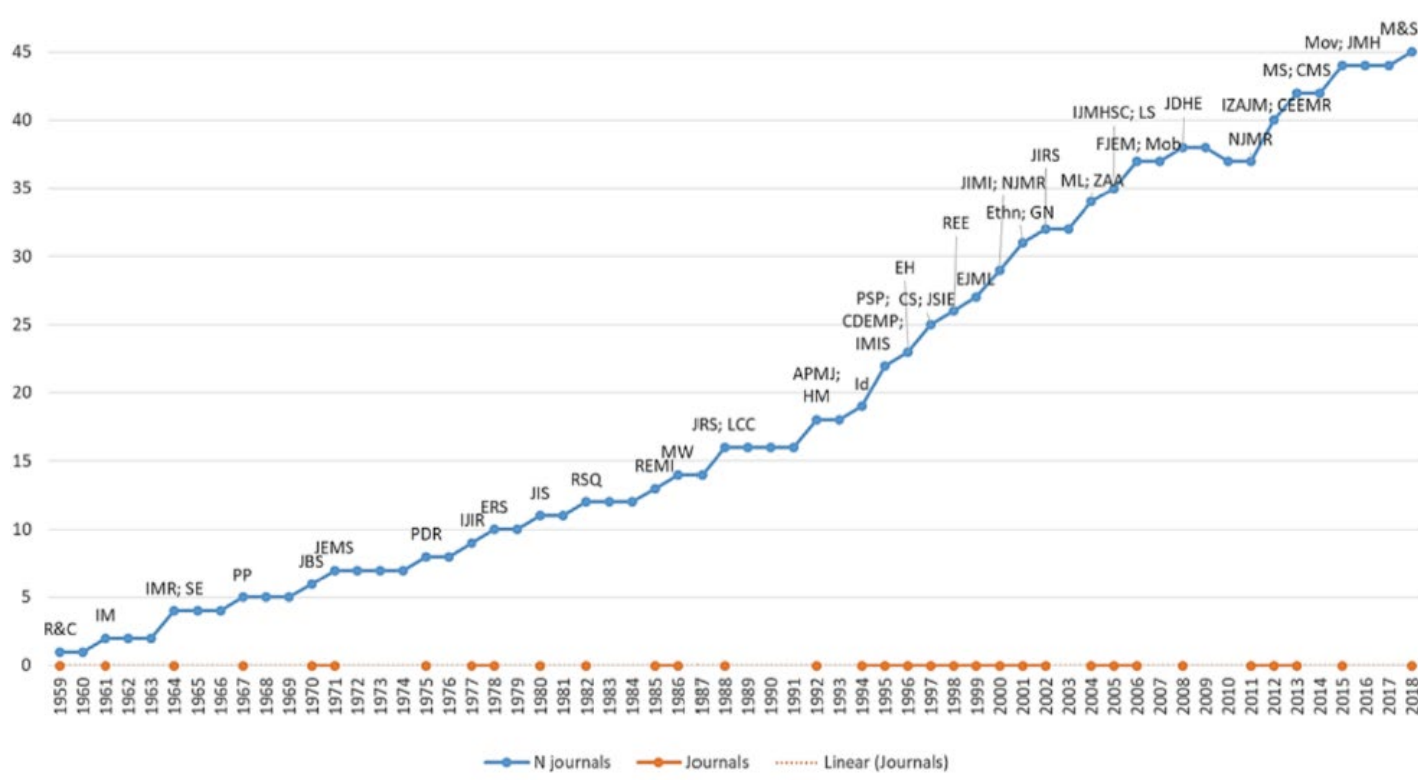
EXISTING DATA IS LIMITED IN QUALITY AND COVERAGE



ANALYTICAL EVIDENCE-BASE FOR UNDERSTANDING MIGRATION AS AN INHERENT PART OF SOCIETAL CHANGE IS STILL LIMITED

Rapid expansion of migration research

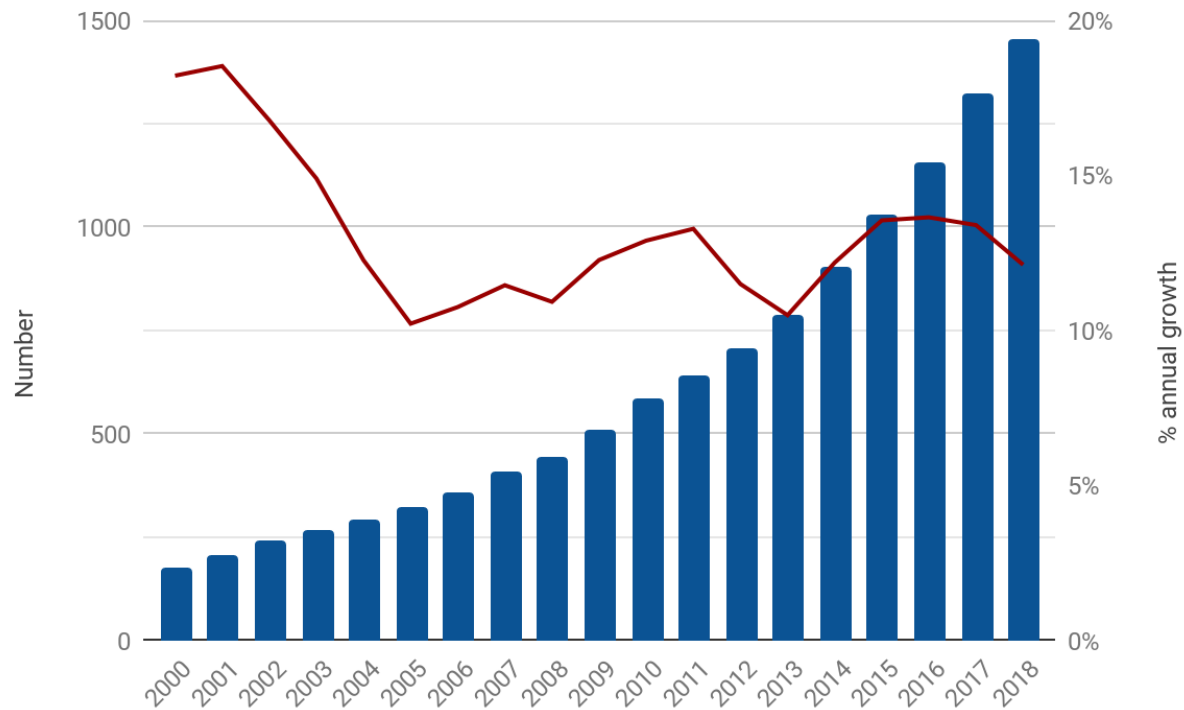
of academic migration journals, 1959-2008



Quelle: Pisarevskaya (2019)

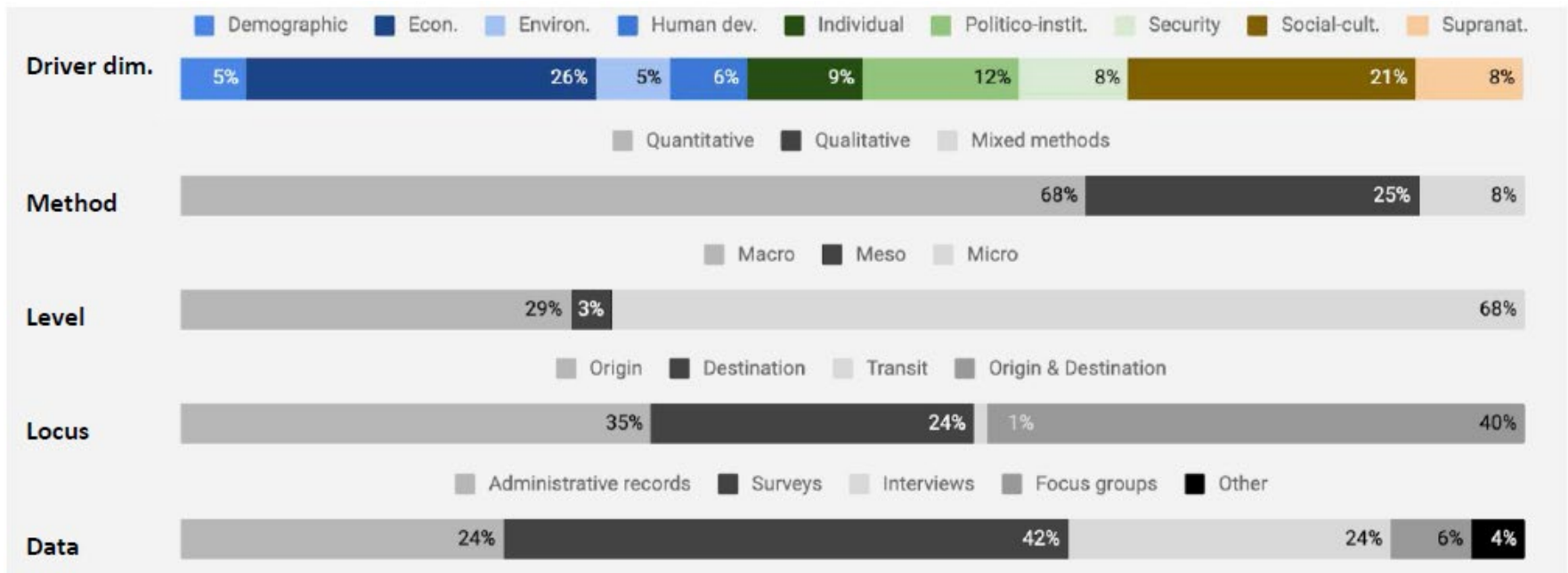
Rapid expansion of migration research

of scientific articles on migration drivers, 2000-2018



What do we know about migration drivers?

Methodological diversity of research evidence on migration drivers



Source: Czaika & Reinprecht (2019)

What we may consider as „evidence-based“ might at best be preliminary

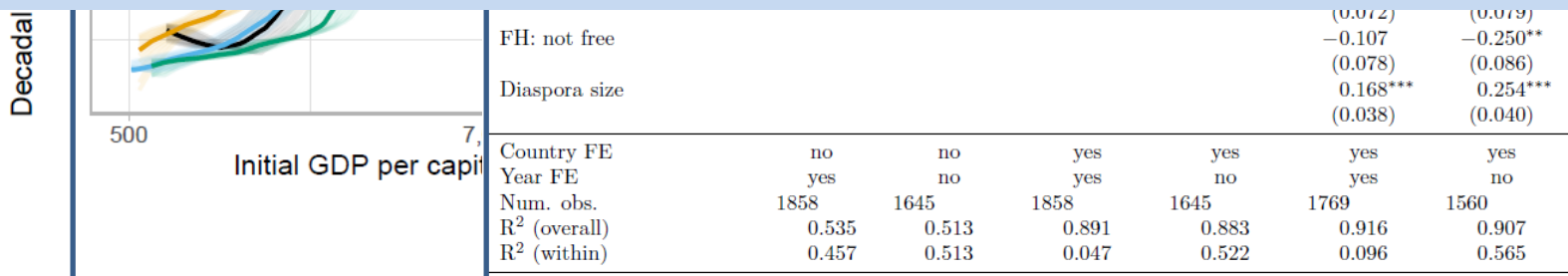
Example: the ‚migration hump/transition‘

Clemens & Postel (2018) (like many others before!) suggest a causal relationship when stating that: *“economic growth has historically raised emigration in almost all developing countries”*.

How reliable are our (theoretical and empirical) models?

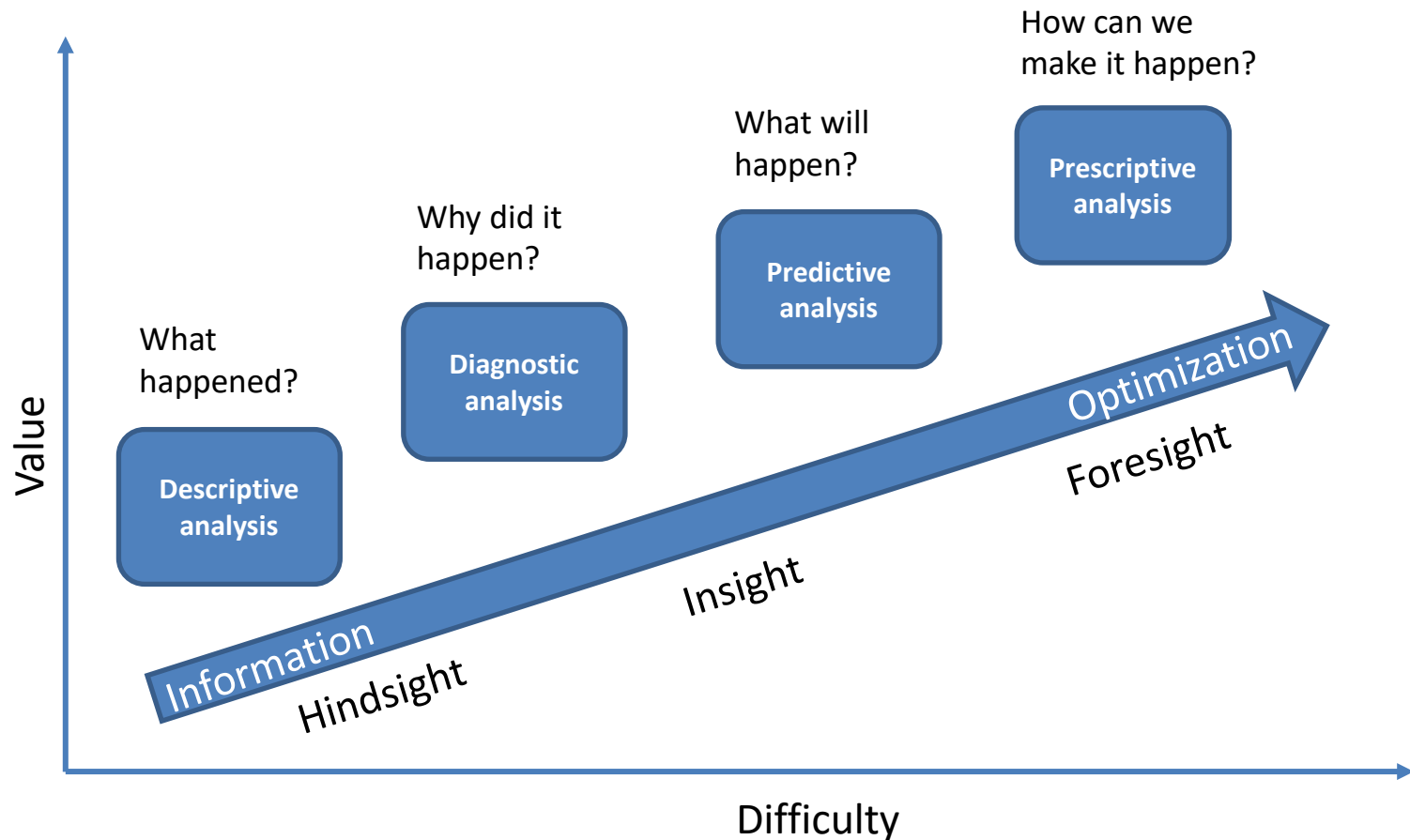
What data, in what quality, is available and used in modelling?

On what (evidence) basis are policy decisions taken?



***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Analytical maturity of data-based evidence





What we know about (the future of) migration is affected by *epistemic and aleatory uncertainties*

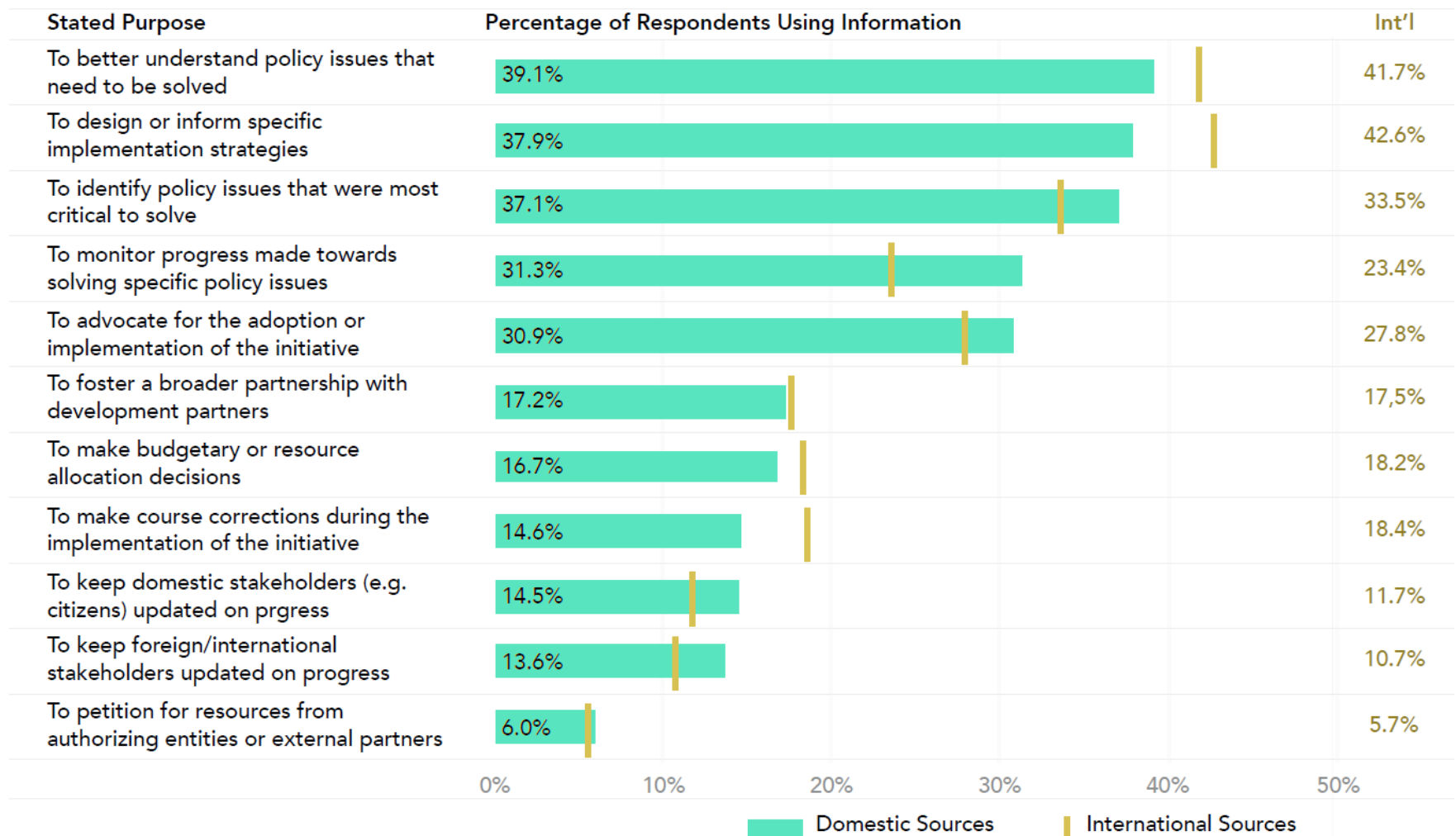
Epistemic uncertainty related to our limited knowledge; potentially reducible (knowable ignorance)

- 1) Complex and uncertain migration driver environments
- 2) Uncertainty about future development of drivers
- 3) Uncertain data and measurement of migration and its drivers
- 4) Model uncertainty
- 5) Migration decisions under uncertainty

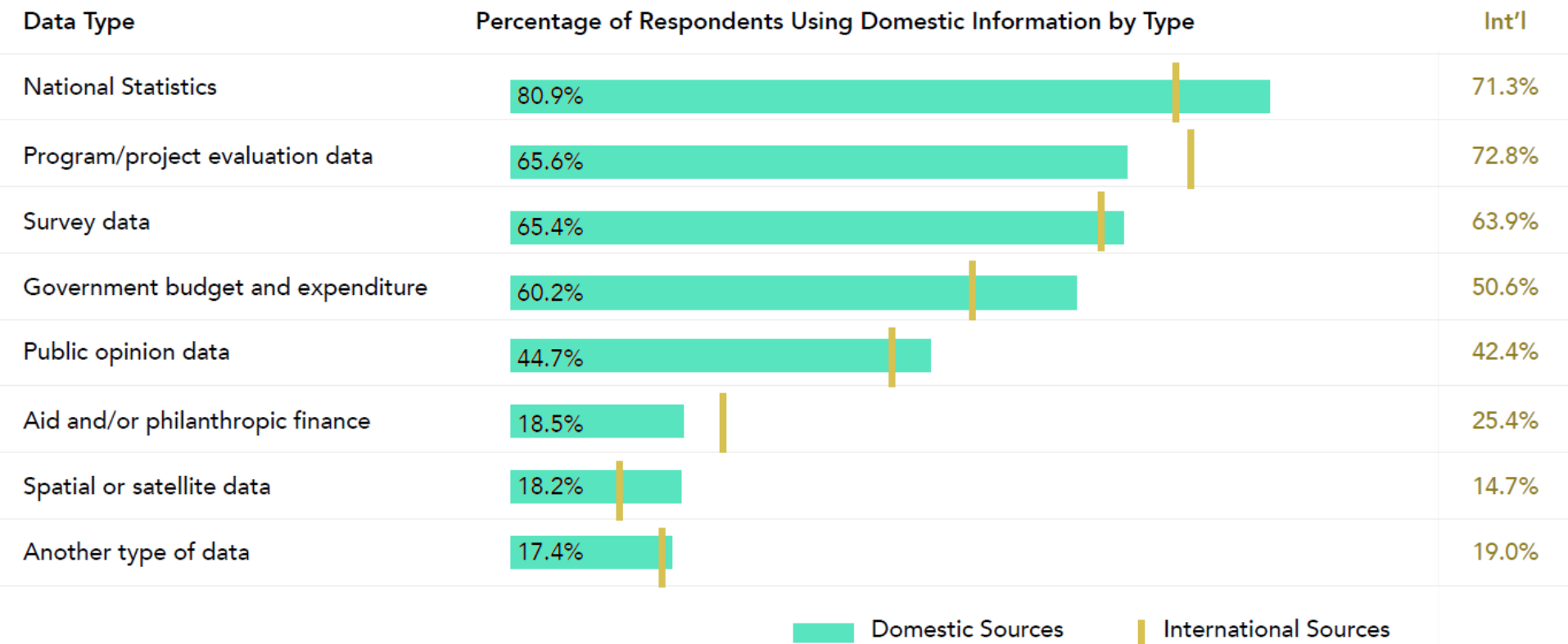
Aleatory uncertainty about the processes and the future; irreducible (unknowable ignorance)

- 1) Unpredictable systemic shocks in key driver configurations
- 2) Unpredictable shocks in methodological advancements and data availability
- 3) Unpredictable behaviour

For which purposes do policymakers / political leaders find information helpful?



Which types of raw data do policymakers refer to / are used to?



The state of migration (-related) data

- Sources of migration data can be broadly grouped into three categories:
 - **Statistical data sources** widely available (e.g. [IPUMS](#) or the [ethmigsurveydatahub.eu](#)).
 - **Administrative data sources** (population register data, permit data etc.) selectively available.
 - **Innovative data sources** (including “big data”) increasingly available.
- Two recent data inventories out of the H2020 **QuantMig project**
 - [Migration data inventory](#): flows and stocks
 - [Migration driver inventory](#)
 - Migration policy database
- However, uneven data quality and coverage



Evidence-based migration policy-making

- Remarkable **advances in data processing, storage, analytical technologies**
- Renewed call for **data-driven decision-making (DDDM)** in migration policymaking and management:

*' ... **policy decisions should be based on sound evidence**. The raw ingredient of evidence is information. Good quality policymaking depends on **high quality information**, derived from a **variety of sources** – expert knowledge; existing domestic and international research; existing statistics; stakeholder consultation; evaluation of previous policies ... ' (UK Cabinet Office 1999).*

- Policy-making requires „**good, reliable evidence**“

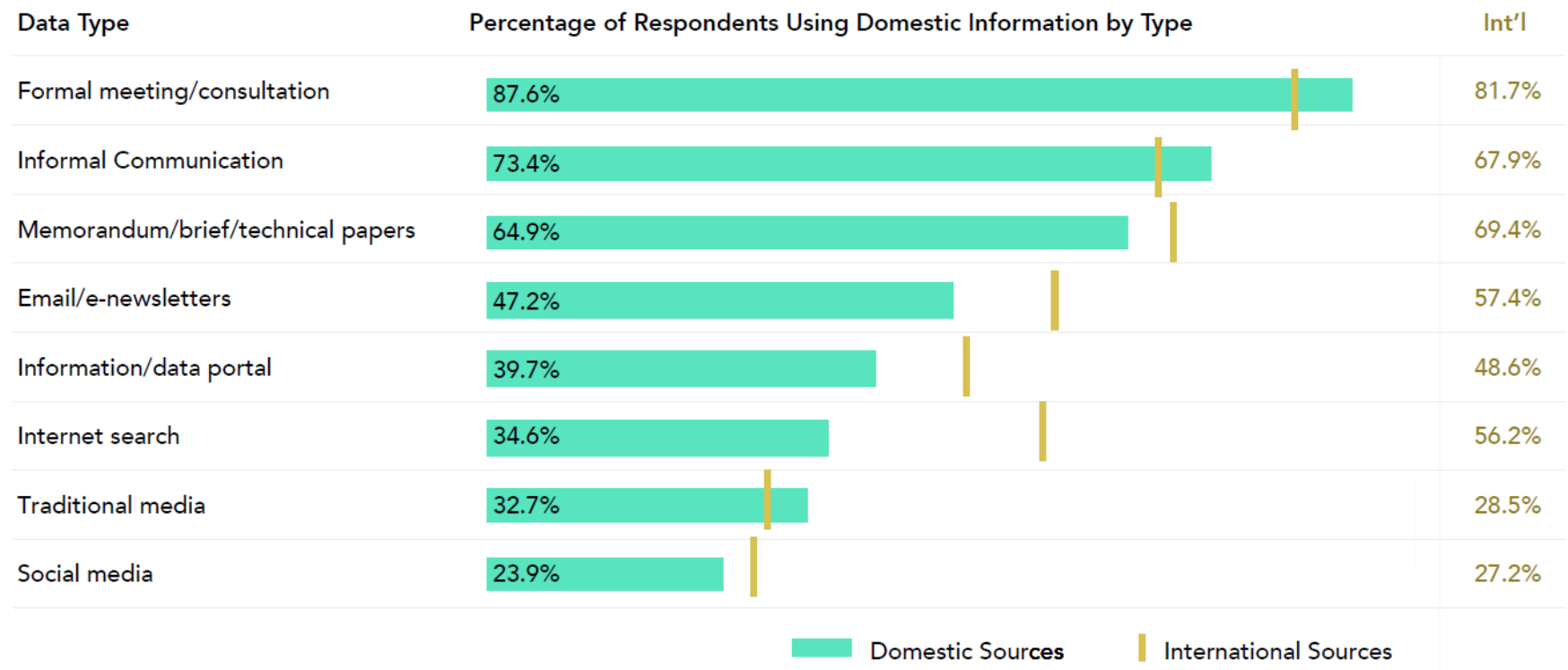


(Migration) policy-making: biases in data utilization and decision-making

- Politics isn't science: evidence is only one element that affects political decisions
 - Other principles of governance and policymaking: ideology, consensus, public opinion etc.
 - Biases in political decision-making
 - Heuristics and cognitive biases in decision-making
 - Decisions often rapidly taken, decisions without all information available or used
 - Evidence can be against political values
 - Evidence often interpreted through one's ideological lens
- Policy process is complex: many entry points where evidence can be injected

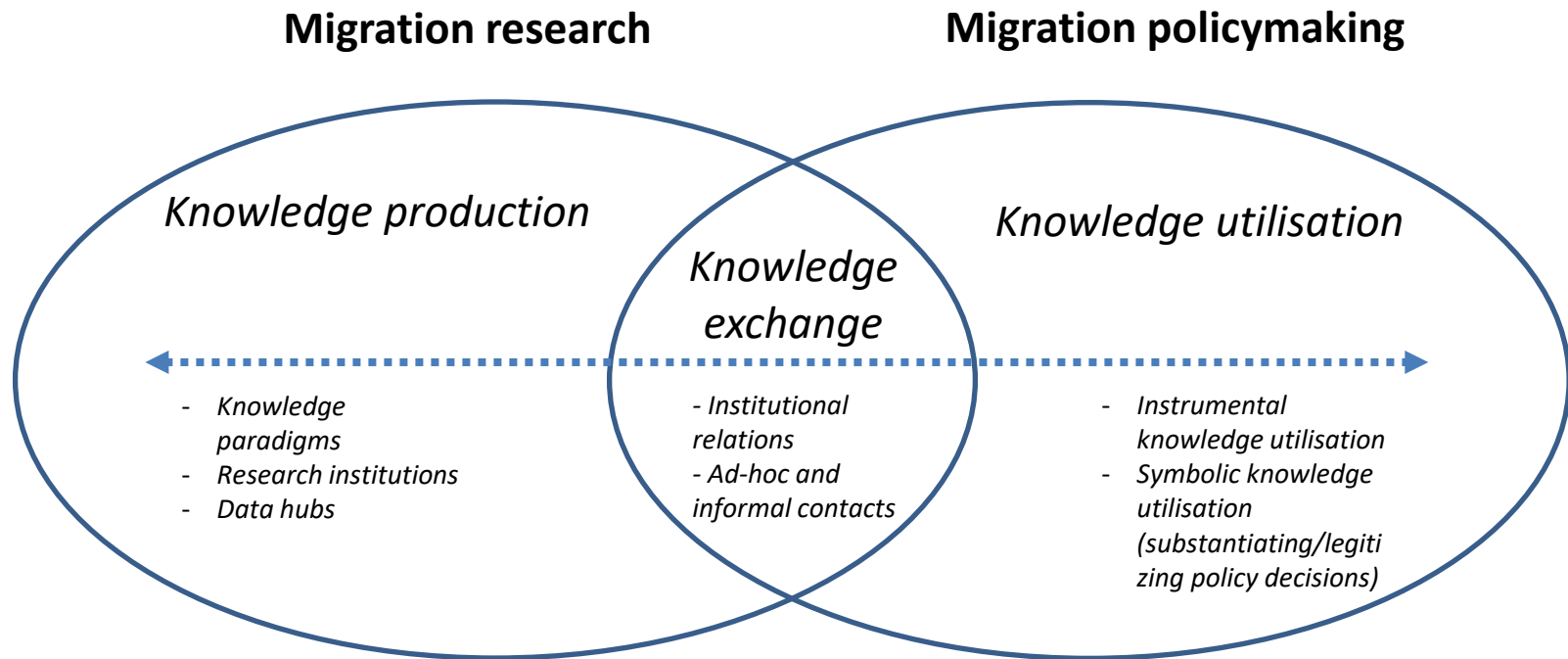
How does data / evidence get into political space?

How do political leaders (N=822) become familiar with information?



Source: LTL Survey 2017, Masaki et al. (2017)

Research-Policy dialogues



Reciprocal nature of research-policy relations:

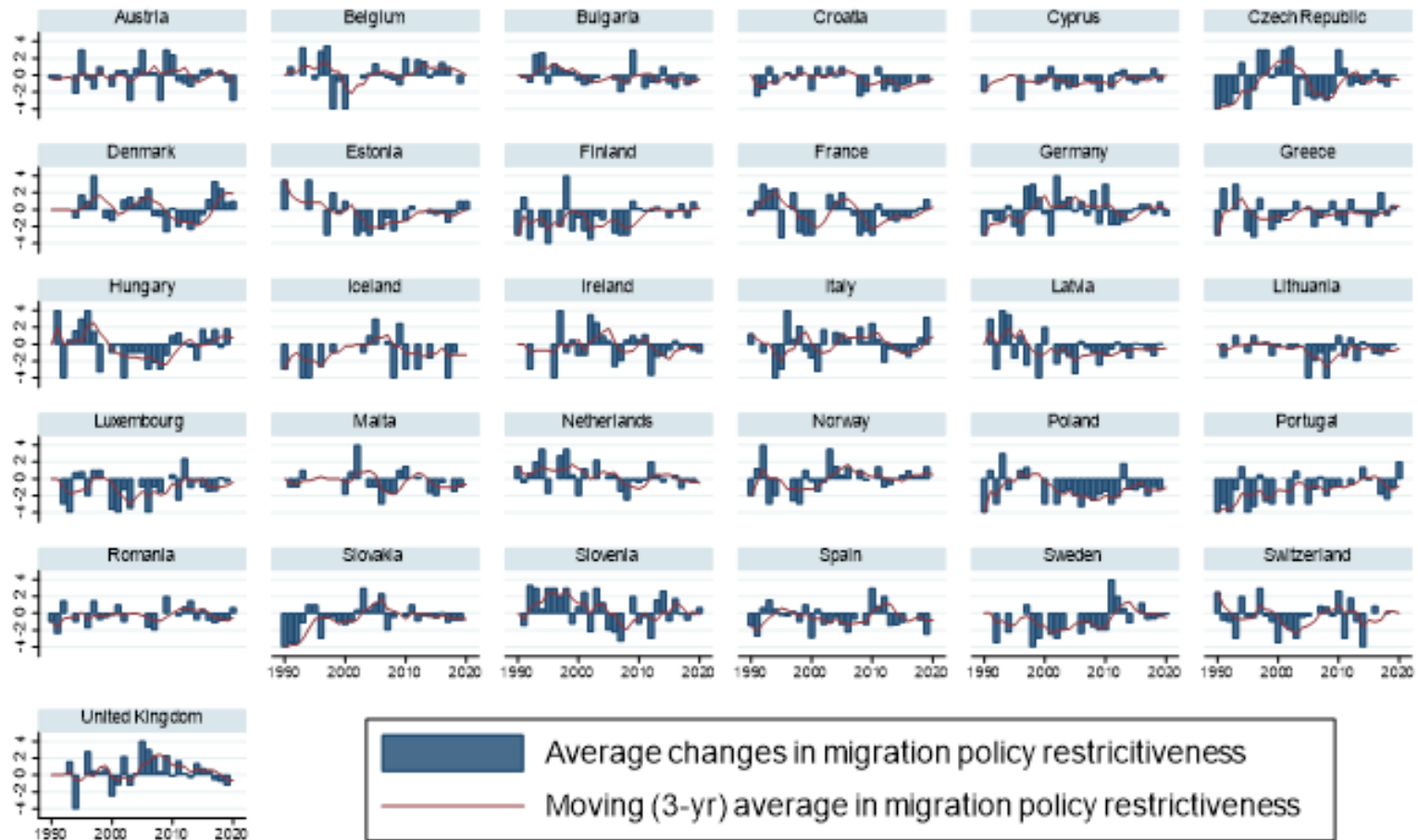
How is data-driven and evidence-based research utilized in policymaking?

How do policy contexts, policymakers and RP-dialogues influence research agendas (incl. data collection, research foci)?

Policymaking itself is uncertain (erratic?)

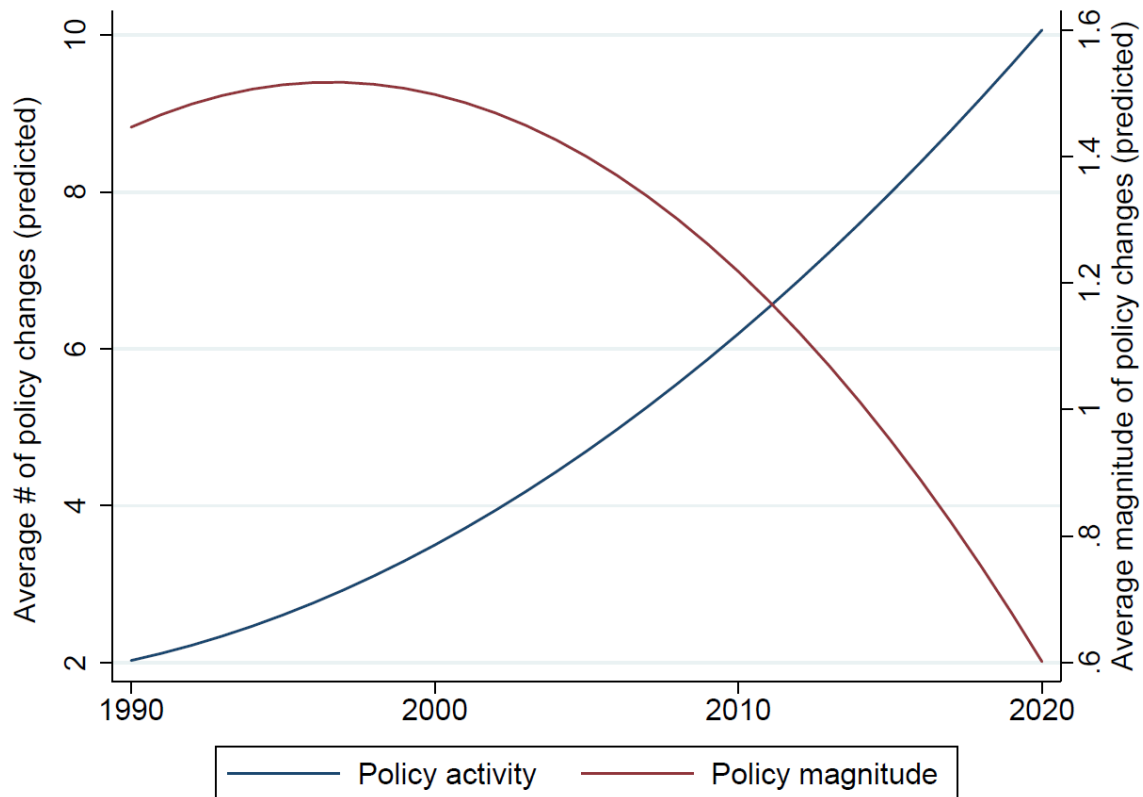
European Migration Policy Dynamics (incl. and reversals), 1990-2020

Changes in migration policy restrictiveness



Trend towards 'fine-tuning' in European migration policymaking

Trend towards more frequent but (on average) rather minor migration policy changes





Enhance capacity for data-*informed* migration management

- **Reduce epistemic uncertainty**
- **Enhance data diversity and coherence for informed migration policymaking**
- **Institutionalize utilisation of data and knowledge**
- **Improve migration policy conception and analysis**
 - Need to distinguish between policies that can be designed and implemented without much information and those which cannot.
- **Strengthen migration policy communication and „mainstreaming“**

Thank you very much for your attention!



Comments and feedback to:



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